

ITALIAN  
TRAVEL SKETCHES

JAMES SULLY LL.D.



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ROMAN WALL OUTSIDE PORTA S. GIOVANNI.

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**ITALIAN TRAVEL SKETCHES**





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# ITALIAN TRAVEL SKETCHES

BY  
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## FOREWORD

### ERRATA

Page 22 for "Howells" read "Howel"

Pages 54, 59 for "James Forsyth" read "Joseph Forsyth"

Page 208 for "Palmero" read "Palermo"

serious interest which has grown the idea of my book.

While preparing these Sketches I have received valuable

assistance from officials and from friends: among others, Dr. Thomas Ashby, of the British School, Rome; and my two

assiduous friends, the Marchese Selvatico-Estense, of Padua,

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## FOREWORD

MANY are the books which have been brought as votive offerings to the Shrine of our Lady of Italy, and viewed as to their intrinsic value they make an assortment hardly less motley than other collections of gifts laid on altars by pious hands. My book accepts the diminished chance of recognition which falls to the late-comer at a crowded reception.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the ready and generous help which I have received during my years of wandering in Italy. This aid includes, not merely valuable directions for travel and letters of introduction from friends, both Italian and half Italianate English, but useful information and personal guidance cordially tendered, alike on the Continent and in Sicily, by local officials, such as directors of Museums and Antiquities, ecclesiastics, and military officers in charge of buildings where interesting remains of old architecture or fresco painting are preserved. Among these helpers on the road I wish to acknowledge special obligations to Cav. Cesare Pinzi, of Viterbo; Comm. Ettore Pais, formerly Director of the Museo Nazionale, Naples, and now Professor in the R. Università, Rome; Dr. Giuseppe Pitrè, the expert on Sicilian folk-lore, of Palermo; Cav. Capponi, Director of the Museo, Terracina; and Canon Filippo Muzzi, of the Duomo, Spoleto. It is to talks and walks with these and others, in whom special knowledge is fired with the enthusiasm of the conscious dweller among beautiful things, that I trace the livelier interest out of which has grown the idea of my book.

While preparing these Sketches I have received valuable assistance from officials and from friends: among others, Dr. Thomas Ashby, of the British School, Rome; and my two assiduous friends, the Marchese Selvatico-Estense, of Padua,

and Dr. William Boulting, author of *Tasso and his Times*, etc.

To my old friends and colleagues, Professor W. P. Ker and Professor Carveth Read, of University College, London, I am much beholden for reading the proofs of my volume, and for suggesting many valuable improvements in its matter and form. In the work of correcting the proofs I have been further aided by my friend, Mrs. J. L. Hammond.

J. S.

WORTHING, *March*, 1912.

# ITALIAN TRAVEL SKETCHES

## I

### INTRODUCTORY HISTORY OF TRAVEL IN ITALY

#### (a) EARLY STAGES

NOTHING, perhaps, is more fitted to foster in us the mood of contentment with our modern world—a contentment deriving a more piquant flavour from a contemptuous laugh at “the good old days”—than a comparison of the old with the new mode of travelling. This comparison is best carried out upon a line of travel which has been followed more or less continuously for some centuries. The journey to Italy is for Englishmen, as well as for other residents in Northern Europe, the best example of such a prolonged habit of travel, and lends itself particularly well to this kind of study.

The most obvious part of the contrast between the old and the new tour through Italy lies in the greatly increased rapidity, ease, and comfort of the journey. This is the result of the development of such things as political freedom, good government, social security, and industrial enterprise in Italy. These improvements have naturally had much to do with the large increase in the number of travellers who visit Italy, though this increase has been greatly furthered by economic,

educational, and other changes in the countries from which they come.

Along with these changes in the conditions of travel in Italy, we have scarcely less well-marked changes in the character and aims of the travellers. Leaving out of account the great diversity of type presented by the miscellaneous horde of tourists in Italy to-day, as compared with those of earlier centuries, one may say that on the whole the new traveller in Italy takes his tour less seriously than the old one. He does not, as a rule, like the mediæval pilgrim, look on his journey as the fulfilment of a religious duty. Nor does he, like the humanist and a later type of traveller, regard it as the completion of his education. Still less is he prompted by the patriotic motive which played a large part in the travels of the sixteenth and later centuries, the desire of bringing the light of the comparative method to bear beneficially on the institutions of his own country. He is in the main "on pleasure bent," whether he thinks merely of having "a good time" or of enlarging and refining his appreciation of art.

Yet though the old and new fashions of travel in Italy seem thus broadly contrasted, they are stages in a process of development which, as such, involves, along with change, continuity and a certain amount of persistence of the old. One who has plodded his way through the old "Voyages," "Travels," and "Letters" will often be struck by the hoary age of habits of to-day which heretofore he may have supposed to be new. We find, for example, that the Englishman in Italy, in spite of many warnings to the contrary, has, in general, been obstinately addicted to the habit of abusing whatever is foreign or un-English. Again, though we are apt to laugh at the dry, perfunctory diary of an earlier



age, we may now and again be reminded how dear the old custom of "keeping a diary" is to many. I once travelled from Italy with some tourists from another continent, one of whom was making up her diary. She asked a lady companion what had happened at Perugia, and was seriously informed that it was the place made noteworthy by the appearance of a beetle in the soup. And do not we of to-day follow closely in the steps of the eighteenth-century purchasers of antiques—and get imposed upon too—when we buy our mosaics, our corals, and other souvenirs of Italy? Perhaps, indeed, if we look a little below the surface, we shall discover that the modern traveller in Italy is much more like than unlike his forerunners.

To retrace the series of gradual changes by which the old type of traveller in Italy has been transformed into the modern tourist would be to write what should be an interesting contribution to a work on the development of European culture. Travel in Italy has had its deepest and most persistent motive in the love of such things as learning, the storied past, and art, and it shows in the several alterations of its form, of its motives, and, one may add, of its effects on the traveller, the movement of modern culture under one of its most interesting aspects.

Without probing our subject so deeply as this, we may touch on a few important stages in the evolution of the modern tourist in Italy. In doing so we shall keep in the main to English visitors; and this, not only because it is the side likely to be more interesting to our readers, but because the Englishman in Italy has, until recent times, greatly outnumbered other national varieties of tourist. For our facts we shall rely on the abundant materials supplied by the travellers, who, to

a quite satisfactory extent, have been pricked with the very human impulse to publish their experiences. From these records we may find out at once much about the changes in the tastes, aims, and points of view of the travellers, and much about the alterations in the experiences of the journey.

Italy has probably been more invaded by the foreigner than any other country. The motive of the invasion was often anything but a curiosity to see the country's marvels. Yet one may surmise that something akin to our admiration tempered even the hostile attitude of those barbarians who visited Rome as her conquered vassals, or later as her vanquishers. Ampère tells us of a Gallic visitor to Rome in the fifth century who left behind him some valedictory lines. In the same century we hear of a classical tour in Italy made by a scholar of Lyons, who refers to places made memorable by the footsteps of the illustrious dead.

Later on, the sentiment towards ruined pagan Rome gave place to a feeling for the Christian relics. This seems to apply to exalted personages like Charlemagne who went to Rome in the guise of a pilgrim.<sup>1</sup>

The pilgrim forms an important stage in the development of the traveller in Italy. The pilgrimages—which may reach back as far as the fourth century—were mainly directed towards Jerusalem and Rome, though other cities which, like Loreto, had sacred relics to exhibit, came to be visited also. Most of the pilgrims bound for Jerusalem crossed a part of Italy, and visited relics in its churches—e.g. at Venice, and to this extent became travellers in the country, helping to map out

<sup>1</sup> The story that our own King Alfred accomplished this pilgrimage is very doubtful.

itineraries, sometimes with what looks to-day a wondrous fashion of naming towns. Through the Papal establishment of Jubilee years the bands of pilgrims became at once enlarged and concentrated, and we read of 200,000 of these sturdy wayfarers visiting Rome during the first Jubilee of 1300. Their journeys were organised much as the personally conducted tours to Italy of to-day are organised. Their special aim, in addition to the more severely religious exercises, was to see the sacred relics. In Rome, it is said, all objects mentioned in the New Testament were supposed to be found; and other towns, e.g. Venice, rivalled Rome in the number of its relics.

To visit holy places and relics was to be not only a “*dévo*t” but a sight-seer; and the pilgrims naturally extended their inspection of things by gazing on the wonders of pagan Rome; and this the more, since learned men versed to some extent in profane history were frequently to be found among them. This combination of curiosity about the sacred and the profane is clearly reflected in the guide-book of the mediæval pilgrims, the celebrated *Mirabilia urbis Romæ* (said by some to date from the end of the twelfth century), which served as a general *vade-mecum* for the visitor. So far as we can now ascertain, it dealt largely with profane antiquities, treating these for popular purposes with a quite delightful freedom, as when Pheidias and Praxiteles are metamorphosed into two “philosophers.”

During these early centuries the remains of ancient Rome retained their aspect of desolation and neglect, the violence of war and fire hastening the natural process of decay. They were, indeed, drawn into the devastating circle of war by being frequently used as forts. Yet we read of an attempt by the authorities at

the end of the twelfth century to save some of the classical treasures from further spoliation.<sup>1</sup>

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries brought noteworthy changes to Italy, adding to its value as a land to travel in. It was then that Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch planted the first three goodly trees in the grove of Italian literature ; then, too, that the pioneers of modern Tuscan Art, Duccio, Cimabue, and his disciple Giotto, were busy painting. One wonders whether any of the English emissaries who were sent to Italy in those days to get money for needy monarch or other purposes, or any of the English students at " fair Padua, nursery of Art," or at Bologna, had a glimpse of this earlier renaissance. It is pleasant to think of Chaucer—who twice visited the country (in 1373 and 1378), saw something of Florence, and perhaps met Petrarch in Italy—refreshing his poetic spirit in the spray thrown forward by the new wave of culture. His journey, due to an official attempt to bring about a commercial connection between Genoa and some English port, was the first of a long series of visits by English writers who drew literary profit from a sojourn in Italy.

The coming of the fifteenth century marks another stage in the unfolding of Italy's new life, the fuller and more resplendent Renaissance. Florence continued to be the chief centre of the art movement. Yet it was only in the second half of the century, when to the feeble attractions of the new art were added the more potent ones of the Universities, now famous for the cult of the new humanistic lore, and of the magnificent courts of Lorenzo di Medici and the rest, that Englishmen began to flock to Italy. Another type of traveller now appears, the old itinerant scholar who journeys to hear

<sup>1</sup> See W. Miller *Medieval Rome* ('Story of the Nations') pp. 50-52.



the renowned teachers of Greek. About the mode of his travelling and the dangers he was apt to encounter, we may learn much from Charles Reade's learned romance, *The Cloister and the Hearth*.

It was a strange moment in the history of Italy: the air was bright with the spring light of new ideas and new experiments in life and in art, but with a light which showed lurid against a dark cloudbank of lawless lust of power, sinister intrigue, and a perfectly callous cruelty. From the eager English scholars who then visited Florence (which was now busy beautifying itself), Ferrara, or Bologna, some of them being of noble birth and having the *entrée* to Papal and Ducal court, we learn but little as to how the motley spectacle moved them. Were they, one wonders, impressed by the dread denunciations of Fra Girolamo Savonarola in the Florentine Duomo in the Lent of 1491? The things for which they appear to have had a vigilant eye were the stately pageants, the processions and courtly ceremonies. John Free, who is said to have seen everything in Florence, tells his patron not only of the four days' celebration when the humanist Æneas Silvius was made Pope,<sup>1</sup> but of the famous aquatic pageant of the Bucentaur at Venice, when the Doge went out to wed the Adriatic by casting a ring into its waters. One student, Thomas Linacre, showed his warm attachment to Italy by putting up an altar on the south side of the Alps as a farewell to the country. Of another, Robert Flemming, we know that he occupied his sojourn at Tivoli by writing a panegyric to that not very scrupulous Pope, Sixtus IV.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an account of these pageants see W. Boulting, *Æneas Silvius*, pp. 260 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See J. H. Lupton, *Life of John Colet*, chap. iv., and Lewis Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England*, chap. i.

The pilgrim sight-seer continued to be a prominent figure among the foreigners in Italy. In the *Itineraries* of W. Wey (1458, etc.) we find good fatherly advice about preserving one's health, practising due economies, and being a match for the rascally patrons and boatmen of the Venetian galleys, which makes us feel that we are getting nearer the times of our familiar Baedeker. In the pilgrim tour of the knight, Arnold von Harff, we have some entertaining examples of a sailor-like way of piling up the wonders.<sup>1</sup>

With the arrival of the sixteenth century we have a group of conditions still more favourable to travel in Italy. For one thing, the stir of travel was in the European air, the recent voyages of Columbus and Amerigo to the West and of Da Gama to the East having stimulated the spirit of far-ranging adventure. To this influence must be added the increased attractions of Italy. The Renaissance had now reached the hour of its full tide, and the stream of culture had overflowed from the University to the Palace, carrying away courtier as well as scholar. Pope and Duke competed one with another for the patronage of literary and artistic talent, and for the antiquities which now began to be unearthed and treasured.

The Italian culture had begun to infiltrate itself into the English gentleman, as we may see in the sentiment for Italy cherished by that eager humanist, Sir Thomas More. That country, indeed, was now looked upon by our courtiers as the land of refined manners, of taste, and of learning. Its language became a fashionable accomplishment. As a consequence of this, there grew up among our young noblemen a

<sup>1</sup> See *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff*, published by Dr. E. von Groote. Cöln, 1860.



passionate desire to visit the country. This is illustrated in the story of Sir Thomas Wyatt overtaking the British Ambassador to the Papal Court when sailing down the Thames and begging successfully for permission to accompany him. Soon after the accession of Henry VIII (1509) a tide of travel began to set towards the peninsula.

The new craze for visiting Italy stimulated the output of guide-books. Some of these were provided by pilgrims to Jerusalem who appear to have now spent more time in Italy, e.g. *The Pilgrimage* of Sir Richard Gylforde (1506) and *Ye oldest Diarie of Englysshe Travel* of Sir Richard Torkington (1517). Another book which sketched out routes to Italy and through the peninsula to Naples is *Arnold's Chronicle* (1519).

Political conditions were now favourable to travel in Italy. The tranquillity in England, which Henry VII, a lover of peace, had managed on the whole to keep unbroken, promised to endure, though a new kind of diplomatic warfare between the English King and the Pope was soon to disturb this happy state of things.

Other difficulties for the traveller to Italy at this time came from the long struggle between the Emperor Charles V and the French King. The learned Croke, sent by Henry (1529) to consult the Italian Canonists as to his divorce suit, touches on the delays caused by this feud. A main object in Croke's letters appears to have been the squeezing of a more liberal allowance for travelling expenses from his royal master.<sup>1</sup> Hence

<sup>1</sup> He says that the expenses of the journey from Lyons to Rome, including horse, guides and courier, amounted to about £44. 5s.; which, according to one calculation, represents over £300 of our present money.

perhaps a possible note of exaggeration in his complaints of the state of the roads, of the extortions of inn-keepers, etc.

The early part of the sixteenth century was a time of peculiar interest for the visitor to Rome. Michael Angelo was in the city beginning his elaborate decoration of the Sistine Chapel ; and about the same time Raphael was called thither to paint his famous frescoes in the Vatican, and later to complete the architectural renovation of Rome begun by Bramante. The state of the ruins of ancient Rome during this century may be seen by a glance at the drawings in Ch. Huelsen's work, *The Roman Forum*. The Popes and the Princes of the time, though they cared for ancient statues and vases, left the ruins alone, or rather stripped them of the marble and the travertine which they needed for their new churches and palaces.

Passing by Erasmus and other earlier travellers in the century, we must note the name of W. Thomas (in Italy from about 1545 to 1550), the author of what is perhaps the first guide-book, *The Historie of Italie, a booke excedyng profitable to redde*, etc. He gives a pretty full account of the antiquities of Rome. His book illustrates the friendly attitude of the traveller towards Italy at this time, praising, among other things, the "very temperate and wholesome ayre" of the country, the prodigality of the table furnished him at Florence, and the religious toleration of the Venetians. Another visitor, Sir Thomas Hoby (travelled c. 1549), among many curious bits of information, tells us that in Siena "most of the women are well learned and write excellentlie well both in prose and verse." He is full of admiration for the magnificent ruins of Rome. A great Frenchman, who had visited Rome shortly before

Hoby, François Rabelais, was too much interested in the living spectacle—the feuds of princes, the reception of the Emperor Charles V in Rome, etc.—to pay attention to the fate of ancient marbles.

The reign of Elizabeth marks the culmination of the influence of Italian culture and manners in England. Our countrymen were now keenly interested, not only in the antiquities and in the gay spectacles of the courts, but in the new art, at least the new architecture and, one may add, the new music. This increased interest naturally tended to extend the impulse to visit the country, and facilitated the excursion by securing to the traveller some knowledge of the Italian language.

We may now note the emergence of a new variety of traveller in Italy, the young gentleman who was to spend some years on what came to be called the Grand Tour, which, in its more common form, was a journey through France and Italy. Coming at the end of the university course, it was in a manner a carrying on of the scholar's visit of the preceding century. But, as a gentleman and courtier, the new traveller was mainly concerned to perfect himself in modern accomplishments, to benefit himself and his country by observing other people's customs and institutions, and to become "Italianate" to the extent of imbibing something of the atmosphere of refined manners, art, and culture of the Italian courts.

If his parents allowed, the young Englishman might carry out this tour alone, aided by introductions to our Ambassadors and distinguished Italians. A well-known example of this freer kind of tour is that of Sir Philip Sidney (1572-5), who passed much of the ample time allotted to Italy in Venice, where he studied, in addition

to Italian history and literature, music and astronomy, and, among other acquaintances, got to know Tintoretto and Veronese. But not many of the young Elizabethan noblemen resembled this paragon of virtue. The travelling "governour" or tutor was called in to guard the inexperienced young feet when they left the native shore. The seriousness attached to the expedition is seen in the elaborate preparation bestowed on it. Not only was some time spent on arriving in the country in mastering its language, but the young Telemach was "coached up" in its sights by help of a prodigious number of descriptive works in Italian and Latin. One tutor told his pupil's father that he had taken with him over sixty such "Relations."

Even when safeguarded by the presence of a governor, the idea of a tour abroad, and especially in Italy, for a youth of twenty or so seemed alarming to many. To begin with, the English humanist had by no means adopted the looser code of morals prevalent among the Italians of the Renaissance. Rumours of these lax manners reached England and gave rise to apprehensions in parental and other bosoms. This fear was reinforced by another, that of the Romish Church, which after the Reformation was looked upon as an unholy thing, as another wily Circe lying in wait for the unwary feet of youth.

Among the early protestations are those of two educators, Roger Ascham (who himself had visited Venice) in the *Scholemaster*, and Richard Mulcaster in the *Positions*. Divines uttered still louder protests. Turler, for example, bitterly complained that our countrymen usually brought three things with them out of Italy: "a naughty conscience, an empty purse, and a weak stomach." The traveller's adoption of foreign manners,



including some vices, was satirised by some of the Elizabethan writers, among others by Shakespeare in the lines :

“ Report of fashions in proud Italy ;  
Whose manners still our tardy apish nation  
Limps after in base imitation.”<sup>1</sup>

A noisy dispute thus arose respecting the comparative gains and losses of continental travel. The “governours,” actual and potential, naturally took a prominent part in it, judiciously supplying a forcible argument for their office by at once enlarging on the benefits of the Italian tour and treating the dangers as real but surmountable under proper guidance.<sup>2</sup>

The visits paid to Italy in these Elizabethan days have bequeathed us but slender records. Sidney has left us hardly anything of his impressions. Moreover, such books as *The Treasure for Travelling* (1578) give us little more than some rather formal practical advice. One rule, by the way, laid down in this book, to take measurements of buildings, statues, etc., refers to a practice continued into the eighteenth century, if not later.

For a fuller knowledge of what these young gentlemen saw in Italy we must go to other sources than their own journals, to the splendid volumes of engravings published in the century which represent the antiquities of Rome as they then appeared. One of these, *I Vestigi delle Antichità di Roma*, was the work of a Frenchman,

<sup>1</sup> *Richard II*, II, 1 ; cf. *As You Like It*, IV, 1 ; also Marlowe, *Edward the Second*, I, 4 ; Thos. Heywood, *The English Traveller* ; and Thos. Nash, *Jack Wilton*.

<sup>2</sup> The engagement of a tutor is said to have added from £130 to £200 (over £1000 of our present money) per annum to the cost of the journey.

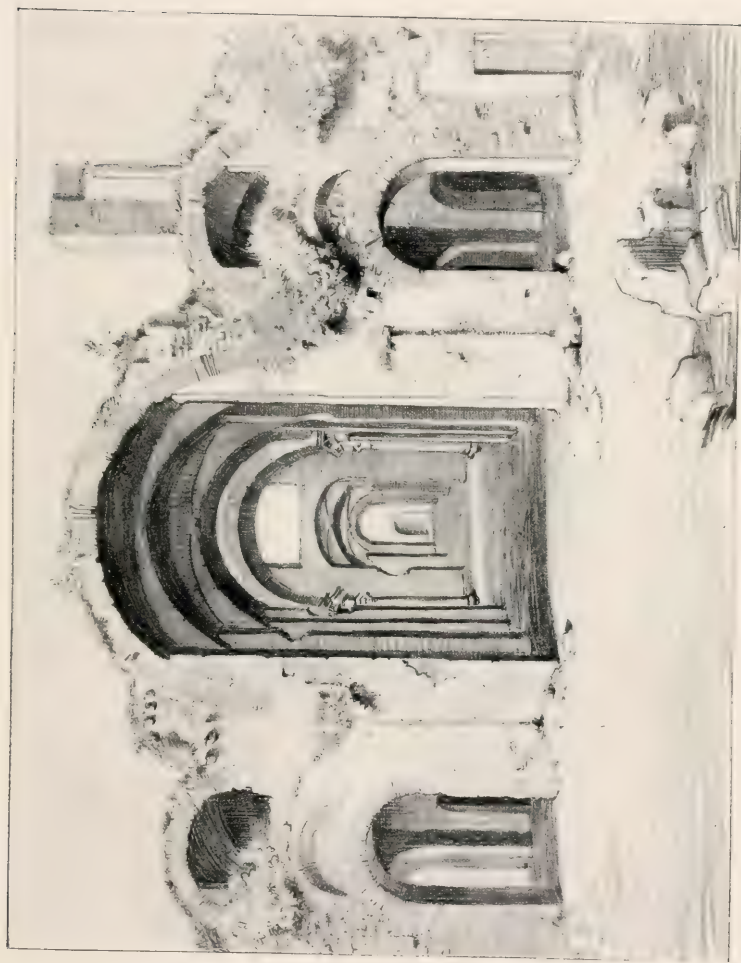
Etienne du Pérac (published in 1575). The engravings bear the dates 1565 onwards. Among these is one of the Baths of Diocletian as they looked before Michael Angelo transformed a portion of the ruins into the Carthusian Monastery and Church. Since this work is supposed to have been carried out between the years 1563 and 1566, it is evident that Pérac's drawing was made none too soon. Indeed, the figure of a man (in the original engraving) digging with a pickaxe suggests that the alterations had already begun.<sup>1</sup>

The century gives us some interesting examples of travel in Italy by Frenchmen, who are apt to bring to bear on what they see a cool and discriminating eye. Joachim du Bellay (in Rome 1547, etc.) in his rather stilted verses, *Des Antiquitez de Rome*, makes us feel that the sixteenth-century embellishers of the city had done little to diminish for some the poignant sadness of the spectacle of the ancient ruins. Montaigne, who visited Italy in 1580-1, brought a less sentimental and gayer attitude to the scene. Turning his back on the dreary ruins, he focussed his eye for the livelier scenes of the present. For him Rome was the court and the nobility. He seems to have cared little for art, saying nothing about Raphael or Michael Angelo; but he went to see such popular sights as the execution of a celebrated bandit. He left the beaten track to visit the fine Renaissance palace at Caprarola, and tells us of the stately barge which the Duke of Ferrara had built for his bride, Margherita Gonzaga, of Mantua.

Towards the end of the century we find clearer

<sup>1</sup> The drawing may be compared with the photograph of another given by Lanciani in *The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome*, p. 436. Pérac's *Vestigi* were republished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the artist's name being sometimes misspelt and sometimes omitted.





BATHS OF DIOCLETIAN BEFORE MICHAEL ANGELO'S ALTERATIONS.  
*From an engraving by Pérac. Circa 1565.*



indications of the spread of the new vogue of Italian travel. In the *Itinerary* of Fynes Moryson<sup>1</sup> (travelled 1591) we have the first complete account of an Italian tour by an English gentleman. He was twenty-three years old when he obtained his licence to travel—presumably alone—from the masters and fellows of his college. He shows his religious tolerance by claiming for the Protestant traveller freedom to listen to a Papist's sermon. Entering Italy from Austria, he spent a winter at Padua, where he learned the Italian tongue. From Padua he went by boat along the Brenta to Fusino, and so to Venice, a pleasant route which one can still take by substituting tram for boat up to Fusino.<sup>2</sup> From Venice he passed through Ferrara, Bologna, and other places to Loreto; thence through Spoleto and Narni to Rome; from the capital through Velletri, and along the old Volscian road and three miles of the Via Appia, to Terracina; and from this point to Gaeta and Naples. On returning, he visited, among other places, Viterbo, Siena, Florence, Pisa, Genoa, and Milan. This journey—the direction often reversed—illustrates the common circuitous form of the complete tour of Italy.<sup>3</sup> Apropos of the escort with which the Pope supplied him in crossing the Campagna, he makes the interesting remark that His Holiness was more inclined just now, after the destruction of the Spanish Armada, to protect Englishmen. He was less fortunate on passing from Florence into the Spanish State of Milan, where he had to journey on

<sup>1</sup> Recently reprinted by the firm of Maclehose in Glasgow.

<sup>2</sup> This water route, formerly the main course by which the Brenta discharged itself, is now called the "Canale di Brenta."

<sup>3</sup> The details of the tour varied a good deal, and even its general form was sometimes altered by crossing the Apennines between Bologna and Florence.

foot in disguise. Like other travellers in Italy, he has much to say about the miracles of the saints and other stories told him by the officials. He seems to have been partial to the Italians, and he even tries to find an excuse for the extortionate innkeepers. The nearest approach he makes to a recognition of Italy's smiling landscapes is the reference to the "sweet walk" between Pisa and the sea. His book contains some shrewd grandmotherly advice, as when he recommends a discreet reticence, quoting the Italian proverb, "In bocca serrata non entra mosca"; and, when counselling the traveller to put his purse under the pillow, adds that there should be placed with it the garters or other things needed in the morning, so that it might not be overlooked.

About the same time that Moryson wrote there appeared the first specimens of the "Governour's Travel-book," a quaint sort of amalgam of narrative and guide-book, which, apparently, the travelling tutor was expected to produce as evidence of his qualifications. Among early examples may be instanced Sir J. Stradling's *A Direction for Travailers*, taken out of a work of Lipsius, and written "for the behoofe" of the young Earl of Bedford "now ready to travell," which reads very much like a bid for a pupil. The writer is all on the side of the travellers, extolling "the brave and heroycall disposition to travel which is onely in noble and vertuous natures." Another book with a similar purpose is Robert Dallington's *A Method of Trauell*, which sets out with an elaborate classification of objects of travel, dividing them into Preservation and Observation, and each of these into smaller classes, and so on, reminding one of the old theological treatises.

If we wish to know what the best men of the time

thought of Italy we must turn from these professional "Directions" to such a work as Sir Henry Wotton's *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, in which a cultivated gentleman and lover of Italy and her art jotted down some impressions of the country where he had spent five years. Wotton had a genuine interest in ancient places, as may be gathered from the fact that in returning from Naples he took wherry so as to see Neptune (Nettuno) and Ostia. He advised others as to the best way of visiting Italy, one of these being "Mr. Milton."

With the seventeenth century there came further changes affecting Italian travel. At home the occasional hindrances from wars during the century could not have been serious. Our relations with the Papal Court continued to exclude permission to visit Rome, though this prohibition was relaxed by the time that Evelyn travelled. In Italy the several states remained divided, and the rivalries of their foreign rulers introduced now and again unpleasant obstacles to the traveller's progress: Lassels, for example, having to avoid armies by altering his route from Turin to Milan. But the chief obstacles imposed on the traveller by the disunion of the Italian States came from the difficulties of passing from one territory to another, with their separate systems of imposts, of laws, of coinage and the rest. The dues levied on travellers on passing the boundaries of states were heavy; even the comparatively light ones imposed by the Papal States amounting to 3s. 6d. for the smallest handbag.<sup>1</sup> The danger of spreading grave contagious diseases gave rise to what must have been in more than one sense a "plaguy" cause of delay, namely bills of health.

<sup>1</sup> E. S. Bates, *Touring in 1600*, p. 336.



The Inquisition, introduced in the previous century, was now referred to as a menace to the English traveller in Italy. So far as one can see, the Italian people were well disposed towards travellers: some of whom, such as Coryat, mention instances of kind attention. The *entrée* into the houses of noblemen was freely accorded, at least to gentlemen of rank, and a distinguished scholar like Milton might count on a welcome from the learned.

The meridian hour of the Italian Renaissance had passed, and with it much of the glory of the great names in learning and in art. Yet the influence of it was still a vital one, as we may see in the large number of "Academies" which now represented in Italian cities the famous Platonic Academy of Ficino, in Florence, in the fifteenth century. In addition to this, the Italian universities still flourished and drew English students: Padua, for example, exhibiting to-day among the coats-of-arms of its former alumni that of William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood.

By this time, too, much had been done to reconstruct and embellish Italian towns. The Renaissance palaces and churches of Rome—where St. Peter's was now completed—Florence, Venice, Genoa, and other cities, together with more utilitarian constructions, such as the Harbour of Genoa and the Arsenal of Venice, made a goodly spectacle; which, with other attractions, gave Italy the first place in the list of European countries worth visiting.<sup>1</sup> It began, moreover, now to develop, both in its architecture and in its painting, the more lavish and imposing baroque manner, which proved to be very much to the taste of its foreign visitors.

<sup>1</sup> See Bates, *op. cit.*, pp. 95 ff.



After the recent spoliations, Rome's ancient buildings remained for two centuries largely neglected, half buried in rubbish. Yet they still preserved a noble and arresting aspect, with broken columns and obelisks strewn around. By Evelyn's time, too, the Catacombs had begun to be made accessible to travellers.

In England the widening influence of the Renaissance still further increased the desire to visit Italy. The growth of Puritanism tended, no doubt, to induce a still greater suspicion of the wiles of the Enchantress among divines and serious folk generally. Yet the century which witnessed the beginnings of modern science supplied a new motive to travel, in the shape of a more scientific form of curiosity. Hence the number of travellers went on increasing;<sup>1</sup> and towards the end of the century it became a large one. Young Englishmen of the upper class continued to make the tour, some alone and others accompanied by a governor. Many of them had a fair knowledge of ancient Rome and a genuine interest in its monuments. As to modern art, they were indifferent to the "primitives" and to the præ-Raphaelite craftsmen in general. The achievements of Raphael and Michael Angelo were accepted largely on authority, though not without occasional misgivings. But their praises were reserved for works which show the decline of Italian art, for the sculptures of Bernini, and for the florid style of architecture and painting then coming into vogue. The lack of intelligent æsthetic perceptions at this time is seen, too, in the general silence of the writers respecting the beauties of the scenery through which they passed.

One great interest of the traveller was still the

<sup>1</sup> In 1615 there were more than seventy Englishmen in Venice as compared with four or five "formerly." Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

pageants in Rome, Venice, and elsewhere. Besides the great church functions, he was wont to note the marriage of Venice with the Adriatic, the Venetian Carnival and the Corso in Naples. Among less imposing sights which attracted his eye were the Italian game of ball, the artificial birds and the organs of the Villa d'Este worked by water, and the veils and the high shoes of Venetian dames. The more searching curiosity of the traveller was directed also to new and quaint customs, from such trifling ones as taking snuff in St. Peter's up to the peculiar Italian mode of counting the hours from one to twenty-four, which set out, not as to-day from the fixed hour of midnight, but from the variable hour of sunset.

We learn a good deal from the travellers as to the way they journeyed. They seem to have gone, for the most part, in pairs or in larger parties. They approached Italy as we of to-day approach it, by way of the Alps or of the Riviera from Marseilles to Genoa. The crossing of the Alps, mostly by the Mont Cenis or Simplon route, was a serious business, especially when an unfavourable season was chosen; and we have a number of lively descriptions of the experience, such as that given by Evelyn of the unpleasant delay and turmoil caused by the peasants on the Simplon, who were enraged at the loss of a goat which they averred had been killed by a dog belonging to one of the travellers.

The route along the Riviera, though it may have evaded these discomforts, supplied others. Owing to the badness of the road, a rowing and sailing boat (*felucca*) was commonly taken, at least for a part of the way: Evelyn, for example, keeping to the land as far as Cannes from fear of Turkish pirates. In Italy, too, the traveller would sometimes abandon land for sea,

in spite of new risks from the pirates, e.g. from Genoa to Lerici, or even farther south. A waterway was also found on rivers and canals over parts of the route from Padua to Ferrara and Bologna; and the scholarly traveller might imagine himself imitating Horace's mixed mode of travelling in his famous journey from Rome to Anxur (Terracina).

The usual mode of travel in Italy was either by horse or by carriage, a low vehicle with movable hood (calash); the one mode being sometimes exchanged for the other according to the state of the roads and to the supplies forthcoming. The carriages are described by more than one traveller as almost as uneasy as carts, and the horses, too, are said to be bad. Misson tells us of an arrangement by which either horse or calash could be changed at any "cambiatura"—which seems to correspond to a Norwegian "station."

The inns were, of course, as judged by our standards, sadly wanting in comforts. The whole number was certainly not large, Misson mentioning that Naples could boast only of three. The prices were apt to be regarded as extortionate, and Sir John Reresby recommended the visitor to dine at the ordinary.<sup>1</sup> In Rome and other large towns rooms were sometimes taken, the host being required to find the linen, and to dress the meat which the traveller purchased. We get some hints, too, as to the cost of living: Misson telling us that in Venetian inns one could be entertained for seven or eight lire a day. The whole cost of the tour in Italy varied greatly according to the mode of travelling. Fynes Moryson gives his annual expenditure (in travelling through Europe) as from £50 to £60; while, on the

<sup>1</sup> On the inns of that time see Bates, *op. cit.*, ch. vi. He tells us that the best Italian inn was just outside Sinigaglia.

other hand, Howells and Evelyn put down the annual cost at about £300.<sup>1</sup>

In their sight-seeing the travellers were aided, not only by the books which they carried with them, but by local guide-books, of which Rome offered a considerable number—a *Roma Antica*, a *Roma Moderna*, and others. Local ciceroni, moreover, according to Misson, offered their services at all the places visited, except Venice.

The travellers themselves continued to produce books, some of which, as the quaint *Essay* of Sir Thomas Palmer (known as the “Travailer”), were of the old pattern of dry logical treatise, others more in the form of a narration of personal experiences. Tom Coryat’s well-known *Crudities* (1611)<sup>2</sup> is an entertaining example of the latter type. His five months’ rush through France, North Italy, Switzerland, Germany, etc., is an anticipation of the ways of the modern transatlantic visitor to Europe. He must have had, too, something of the smartness of our motoring “impressionist.” He picked up a good deal of information during his flight: telling us among other things of the traveller’s liability to have any excess of luggage confiscated to the prince or magistrate of the territory entered. He opened his eyes with boyish wonder at the sight of the forks used at the Italian table, quaintly suggesting, as the reason of the strange custom, that “the Italian cannot by any means indure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing all men’s fingers are not alike clean”; and he is said to have adopted the custom on his return

<sup>1</sup> Bates calculates the minimum annual expense for “respectable travelling” as the equivalent of £400 of our money. *Op. cit.*, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> This book has also been recently republished by Maclehose, Glasgow.



to England. His daring experiment in quick travelling was smiled upon by fortune; and the reader may wonder whether James I's "privileged buffoon" was the more pleased with the attentions of Sir Henry Wotton, then Ambassador in Venice, who took him about in his own gondola, or with the heavy sheaf of mock panegyrics which he managed to extract from English *litterati* and to print in his book.

Coryat's embodiment in his travel-book of the learned Kirchner's "oration" on the benefits of travel illustrates the continuation of the controversy of the sixteenth century. Bacon in one of his pithy essays distilled the true wisdom of the subject, urging the traveller among other things to leave his prejudices at home, and to form lasting personal connections in the country visited. The note of alarm was still rung by stern anti-papists, such as Bishop Hall in his *Quo Vadis?* (1617); while other writers, like Purchas, who took a favourable view of the benefits of travelling when carried out by the duly qualified, inveighed against the practice of many "who, coming to their lands sooner than to their wits, adventure themselves to see the fashions of other countries where their soules and bodies find temptations to a twofold whoredom."

The early part of the century saw more than one illustrious English writer in Italy. Thomas Hobbes twice travelled there as governor to pupils, who were, we will hope, better behaved than the one whom Ben Jonson had some years before taken with him to France, and who had made a degrading exhibition of his bear-leader in the street. Hobbes met Galileo at Florence, and received, with the light of Italian skies, flashes of his new philosophic ideas. A yet more interesting



visitor was Milton, who in 1638-9, at the age of thirty—the ideal age, perhaps, for Italy—traversed the peninsula as far as Naples. We can see that the fair and storied land touched him on many sides and profoundly, even though he has veiled from us much of what to the well-disciplined young Puritan must have been a glowing romance. Milton, it will be remembered, though made much of by the enthusiastic *literati* of the Academies, excited a less friendly sentiment when, heedless of the advice of Fynes Moryson (who had made pretence of going to Mass) to conceal one's religion, he openly confessed his Protestant faith to the friar with whom he travelled to Naples. He enjoyed, we may be sure, speaking the musical Italian tongue which, he tells us in his *Tractate of Education*, a boy "may have easily learnt at any odd hour," having himself, perhaps, so picked it up from his half-Italian school friend. In his case, as in that of later poets, the voyage of Italy was fruitful of noble verse. Another traveller, the Frenchman J. J. Bouchard (travelled in 1632), upon entering the Spanish territory of Naples, encountered another kind of danger. France and Spain were still at war; he was compelled to go disguised in biretta and cloak; and, in spite of his precautions, he was discovered and imprisoned as a spy, though he was treated with the most gentlemanly consideration.

Another type of frequent visitor to Italy at this time—a sort of journeyman tourist—was the painter, represented by Vandyck and Velasquez. A combination of the aims of the tourist and the man of business, involving a longer residence in the country, is illustrated in the case of James Howell, whose work *Instructions for Forreine Travel* (1642), though sadly

confused in its form, contains some shrewd advice to the continental traveller based upon intimate personal knowledge. Among other results, his book helped to send the English tourist to Siena as the place for learning the Italian language in its best form—the “lingua toscana.”

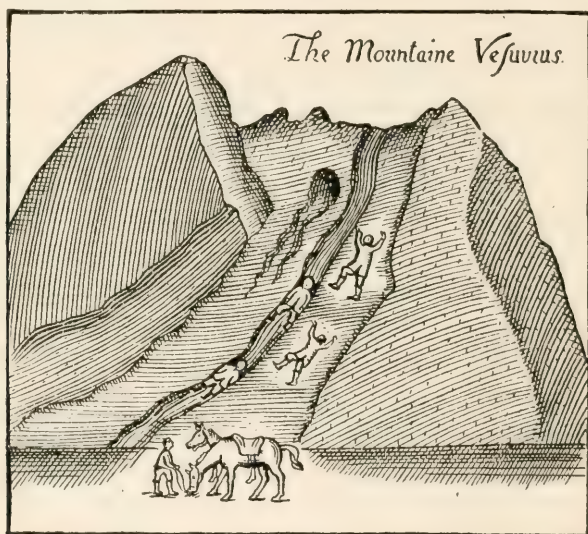
The first narrative of Italian travel by an Englishman worthy to be called literature is to be found in Evelyn's *Diary*. His journey in 1644, when twenty-four years old, with a Balliol friend, reads like the tour of happy youths to whom all new things are interesting, and extortionate innkeepers and other nuisances count as nothing. Though he shows the limitations of the art-taste of his time, as in dismissing buildings like S. Paolo fuori le mura and St. Mark's at Venice as “Gotiq,” he is one of the first to note such things as the beautiful fountains of Viterbo, and the fine view from the balcony of the Belvidere in the Convent of S. Martino at Naples. Did he, one asks oneself, happen to look down over city and Bay at midday and hear all the bells clang out, their dissonances softly muffled as by some spirit of joyous jubilation in the air?

Another youth (said to be under twenty) who visited Italy about this time was John Raymond. His little book, *An Itinerary . . . made in the years 1646, 1647*, surpasses Evelyn's *Diary* in its quaint misspellings, e.g. “Filoaco” and “Filouca” for felucca.<sup>1</sup> He has a pretty fancy for Roman gardens, vowing that Villa d'Este shall be the model for his country seat. His amusing drawings—particularly one of men climbing and glissading down a steep Vesuvius—are the

<sup>1</sup> The headline of the pages is “Il Mercurio Italico.”

precursors of what one may find to-day in the stranger's book of a remote Alpine inn.

Both Evelyn and Raymond were enthusiastic students of antiquities, not only in Rome, but in the Campagna, more especially along the route of the ancient Via Appia. Riper scholars came to see them also at this time, among others the Seigneur de Balzac, who grew wise, he tells us, dreaming on the banks of the Tiber.



ASCENDING AND DESCENDING VESUVIUS IN 1674.

The Roman Forum, it is to be noticed, comes in for little remark, Evelyn merely telling us that he passed it. This omission is partly explained by a glance at a drawing of the Campo Vaccino, as the neglected grazing place was called, taken from the Capitol in 1650.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of Milton's brave example, few visitors went to Italy during the Commonwealth, although the

<sup>1</sup> Hülsen, *The Roman Forum*, Fig. 12, p. 43.

Puritan regime banished at least one cavalier to that country, Sir John Reresby, who brought the gay Royalist temper to bear on what he saw, delighting among other shows in the riotous spectacle of the Carnival. The Restoration in its turn drove some Englishmen into exile in Italy, and the serious figure of the naturalist, John Ray, on his tour of botanical research forms a curious pendant to that of the light-hearted Cavalier. He illustrates a not uncommon type of gatherer of out-of-the-way information when he touches on such curious things as the birds and vegetables used at table in Italy, and the queer Lilliputian Republic of S. Marino.

The Restoration marks a noticeable decline in the gloomy diatribes against travelling on the Continent. The restored monarch had himself been abroad, and his return ushered in a new revival of interest in Italian travel, as we may see by a glance at the *Diary* of Mr. Samuel Pepys, who thought an account of Rome such as he got from his friend Mr. Brisband "the most delightful talk a man can have of any traveller."

The second half of the seventeenth century yielded no very striking book of Italian travel. Some of the works published are anonymous, e.g. one by "A Person of Quality"; while others are by men so unimportant as to be passed over by the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The prevailing type of Travels is now the impersonal guide-bookish sketch. The most important examples are *The Voyage of Italy* (1670), by the Catholic divine and much-travelled tutor Richard Lassels, and *A New Voyage to Italy*, by Francis Maximilian Misson, a Huguenot refugee and travelling tutor, which was translated into English in 1695. The



two writers are particularly good specimens of the governors, of whom Evelyn wrote that they were mostly "a pedantic sort of scholars." Their books are characterised by a wide range of information and intimacy of knowledge, and they long held a high place as standard guides. They illustrate the differences in the aspect of the Roman antiquities between their time and ours. They indicate, too, a further extension of the Italian tour, as also the severely methodical procedure in sight-seeing now prescribed for the traveller; who is bidden, among other things, to equip himself not only with "prospective glasses," but with a graduated cane and fifty fathoms of thread for making measurements of statues, columns, etc.

The note of the fierce anti-papist is again heard in the *Letters* of Bishop Burnet, who travelled in 1685, 1686. He has a poor opinion of the Italians: telling us that friendships are rare among them, owing to the prevalence, especially in Venice, of a "horrid distrust," and that they are possessed with a "ravenous" superstition. The *Letters* of the Earl of Perth, who was in Italy in 1695, contain the delicious remark that the festivities of the Carnival would in Scotland be thought "downright madness."

The close of the century found the traveller in Italy beginning to penetrate still farther into its storehouse of ancient treasure. The Frenchman Ch. Bourdin and the Earl of Perth both visited Assisi in 1695; though neither has anything to say of the frescoes of Giotto—possibly less accessible to inspection then than now. Bourdin, like others of this period, apologises for "erecting himself into an author," naively pleading as excuse "the urgent prayers of friends." A more serious investigation of antiquities is indicated in the



work of Bernard de Montfaucon, who, in his learned tour to Libraries and Antiquities, visited Ravenna, making drawings of the curious monograms on the capitals of the Church of S. Vitale.

## II

### INTRODUCTORY HISTORY OF TRAVEL IN ITALY

#### (*b*) THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

THE eighteenth century effected a still larger extension of travel in Italy. The conditions were, to be sure, not altogether favourable to a continental tour. The disturbed state of Europe during the prolonged wars of the century, in which not only England, but to some extent Italy, was involved, must have added to the delays and to the perils of the expedition. They had the result, too, of repartitioning Italy, placing her States yet more firmly under the tyrannous rule of Austrian, Spaniard, and Frenchman.

The country still welcomed the stranger; though Gray seems to make a hardship of the fact that admission to an Italian house was difficult without "a particular recommendation." Nature was then, as now, not always propitious, for we read of alarming earthquakes.

Italy was still in a backward condition as regards the comforts of civilisation. In Milan, we are told, many of the streets were crooked and narrow, and paper windows were frequent. The country had, moreover, ceased to be the centre of European culture; nor did her courts allure the foreigner with so brilliant a display





THE ROMAN FORUM (CAMPO VACCINO).  
*From an engraving by Vasi, published in 1747.*

of learning and artistic achievement as of yore. Yet Venice, at any rate, while declining in art as well as in political power, preserved her gay social life and her pageants, becoming, indeed, one of the show places of Europe;<sup>1</sup> while Rome and Florence still had their splendid church functions, as well as their carnival and other shows. In addition, the country held out to the foreigner the tempting bait of its new gorgeous buildings and paintings. The arts of antiquity now began to display their remains more generously. A good deal of antique sculpture had been collected into palaces and museums, more particularly the Vatican and the Uffizi—some, as the Palazzo (or Villa) Albani, being then more accessible than they are to-day. Herculaneum had been discovered early in the century; and, by its close, excavations had opened up, not only Pompeii and a part of Herculaneum, but other antiquities like Hadrian's Villa. The Roman Forum continued to present its neglected but picturesque appearance, as may be seen by a glance at the plates in the splendid volumes of Vasi's *Delle Magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna* (1747), and of Piranesi's *Le Antichità Romane* (1756), where the massive ruins are seen wreathed with exuberant weeds and flowers, and their feet caressed by the peaceful shepherd and his flock. A good example is a plate in Vasi's work which gives a view of the Campo Vaccino, or Cowfield, with the columns of the temple of Castor and Pollux in the foreground and the Church of SS. Cosma e Damiano and the three arches of the Basilica of Constantine in the distance.

Attracted by all this, visitors arrived in larger numbers

<sup>1</sup> See the recent volume, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*. From the French of Philippe Monnier.



representing a wider diversity of rank and of interest. Among these we find the English type of rollicking youth, who would carry his betting propensity to the length of a contest as to which of his party should venture farthest and remain longest in the mouth of Vesuvius. Some of the travellers seem to have been astonishingly simple-minded: one repeating a story of how Michael Angelo stabbed his model so as to get a more realistic representation of the agonies of the dying Christ. A delightfully naive revelation of unpreparedness is given by one Lancelot Temple, Esq.,<sup>1</sup> who tells us, in his tiny volume *A Short Ramble*, etc., that he would have overlooked the Laocoon—a much-lauded group at that time—had he not seen it mounted on a handsome pedestal surrounded by an iron rail, and known that it was the celebrated study of Michael Angelo.

The confession of Lancelot Temple suggests that young gentlemen now ventured to dispense with the governor. A more striking illustration of the growing freedom in continental travel is the appearance of women among travellers in Italy. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters from Italy* evoked from her lady editor<sup>2</sup> a note which sounds singularly modern. She confesses that she is "malicious enough to desire that the world should see to how much better purpose the ladies travel than their lords." By the end of the century, too, the tourist was supplemented by the foreign resident—an English colony of some size having formed itself in Rome.

Amid considerable differences of taste and of aim we can detect a common mental attitude in these

<sup>1</sup> The name is a pseudonym for John Armstrong.

<sup>2</sup> See *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*. 1809, Vol. XIV.

eighteenth-century travellers in Italy. It was the age of rational illumination, when all cultured persons could reach a common understanding of things, including works of art and their values. The appreciation of beauty and art was a matter, not of refined feeling, but of cold rational intuition. The travellers looked upon Italy as the great treasure-house of art as understood by the enlightened person, that is to say classical art both ancient and modern. They travelled as fully illuminated gentlemen, amply furnished with intellectual as well as with material standards of measurement. Boswell hit off their aims when he wrote that he wished to travel, not as "milord" but as "a scholar and man of elegant curiosity." The aim was half æsthetic, half scientific—to find specimens of good or correct art as determined by an elegant and unerring taste. This task required the traveller to note down what he found and approved, as also to some extent what his taste condemned as bad. In the published records we can clearly see the limited range of his artistic outlook. In dealing with the antique he does not appreciate the best sculptures, but rather those which belong to a more decadent period. Similarly, in estimating modern sculpture and painting, he passes by, for the greater part, all work before that of Michael Angelo and Raphael. The prevailing attitude of enlightened superiority towards the earlier and more naive art of the "primitives" is illustrated in the remark of De Brosses, apropos of Giotto's frescoes in the two chapels of Padua—"this highly vaunted painter would not now be allowed to paint a tennis court." Even Michael Angelo's robustness offends these refined gentlemen, since it savours of the non-classical or "Gothic." For most of them, as indeed for most men,

the art of their day had the highest value, and they extolled Domenichino, Guido Reni, and the other fashionable painters of the hour in what strikes one to-day as unmeasured language.

The same limitations of taste reappear in what they say, and omit to say, respecting the charms of natural scenery. The kind of landscape which appealed to these stiffly arrayed eighteenth-century travellers was the flat regularities of the Lombard plain; where, as Keysler tells us, fertile meadows intersected by canals, rows of trees and vineyards “feast the eye in the most elegant manner.”

This attitude towards art and nature was, however, not uniformly observed. Smollett lapsed into a less artificial and decidedly unclassical view of art when he condemned Michael Angelo’s sculptured Pietà in St. Peter’s, on the ground that there is something indelicate, not to say indecent, in a naked man’s body lying on the knees of a woman. We may see, too, indications of the germ of a larger and freer appreciation of art, as, for example, in Walpole’s more discriminating use of the term “Gothic”—which, as loosely used, covered all that was not classical—and in his bold claim that Gothic architecture was “at once magnificent and genteel.”<sup>1</sup> The same tendency to break through the artificial shackles of the time seems to peep out in the fun poked at the “Connoisseur”—the “expert” who took the traveller over the galleries, etc.—by Oliver Goldsmith, when he says that all you have to do in order to become one is (1) to observe that pictures might always have been better if the painter had taken more pains, and (2) to praise *the works of Pietro Perugino*. The pretensions of the enlightened self-

<sup>1</sup> See Leslie Stephen, *The Playground of Europe*, p. 55.

sufficing traveller appear also to be ridiculed : as when Joseph Tucker, in his examination of the aims of travel, mentions “ to obtain a reputation of being a man of *vertù* (i.e. *virtù*), and of an elegant taste.” The craze for collecting pictures, which frequently went with this aim, is ridiculed by Oliver Goldsmith in his *Letters from a Citizen of the World*.

The habit of observing and jotting down notes of things extended to spectacles, curious customs, and other things novel to the traveller. These included the picturesque old ceremony of the Marriage of Venice with the Adriatic, a function prolonged till the year 1796.<sup>1</sup> At Rome, among other ceremonies noted, is the *Possesso*, or entrance of the newly elected Pope into the possession of the Lateran. Interesting accounts, too, are given of the proceedings of the Conclave, to which the witticisms of Pasquino and Marforio still made a merry accompaniment. Even popular entertainments began to be noticed, such as the recitals from Ariosto and other poets of chivalry by the Cantastorie of Southern Italy.

Among customs, besides the Italian mode of counting the time, reference is made to the *cicisbeo*, or, as he was called in Venice, *cavaliere servente*. This institution had the teasing fascination of something at once mysterious and shocking till Mrs. Piozzi, and later Byron, came to the aid of insular ignorance and made the custom more intelligible.

Our travellers were interested in other sights, too, such as the way of putting mosaics on the cupola of St. Peter's. Nor did their curious eyes overlook such remarkable personages as the Pretender, who for a

<sup>1</sup> The remains of the splendid galley, the *Bucentaur*, are still to be seen in the Museo Civico at Venice.



time was to be seen in the *salons* of Rome, or Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Hamilton and her patroness, the Queen, at Naples.

Although Smollett remarks that the feeling of travellers tends to one of two extremes, "all panegyric" or "all censure," one would infer from the books of travel that the prevailing attitude was one of critical aloofness. Only very rarely, for example, does there appear any appreciation of the picturesque dress and customs of the common people.

The journey to Italy continued to be a slow and trying experience. Mr. Seccombe tells us that the pace of locomotion had changed but little from the days of Julius Cæsar to that of George III. The usual mode of approaching the country continued, as in the last century, to be by the Riviera or by one of the two mountain passes; though, as we may see from Thomas Martyn's book, *The Gentleman's Guide* (1787), some were disposed to vary the route by striking the Gotthard, the (Great?) St. Bernard, and the Brenner pass. The crossing of the Alps was still a horrible experience, though early in the century women had begun to brave its hardships, as well as those of climbing Vesuvius.<sup>1</sup> The road through Italy, too, followed the old lines. New places, however, began to be noted lying in or near the routes followed, such as Bergamo, Brescia, Pavia, Parma, Piacenza, and Modena in the north; Forlì, Ancona, Narni, and Cività Castellana on the southward journey to Rome; and, on the road from Velletri to Terracina, the convent at Fossa Nuova where Thomas Aquinas died. Ravenna now attracted some attention, even though there was as yet no proper

<sup>1</sup> The ladies are praised for their pluck by the painter, M. Russell, in his *Letters* (1739).



appreciation of old mosaics. Those who, like Addison, had more feeling for the classical antiquities began to go out of the beaten track, visiting such places as the famous river Clitunno (Clitumnus), Monte Circeo, Ostia, and Frascati (Tusculum).

The accommodation offered by inns seems to have remained scanty enough, and a convent was sometimes resorted to in the Apennines. Some travellers, as Smollett and Sharp, describe them as uncomfortable and dirty; and even Baretti, an Italian, speaks of the lying touts, one of whom tried to secure the traveller for his own inn by saying that the one asked for had been burnt down.

We gather, too, from the books, interesting particulars about the inns and apartments in Rome and other large towns. The Piazza di Spagna and its neighbourhood had already become the centre of the tourist world in Rome.<sup>1</sup> At Siena a palace was turned into an inn, as it sometimes is to-day. The heating or "airing" of rooms was effected by large braziers (*cal-dani*), for which an Englishman may still be thankful if he happens to stay at Frascati during a prolonged tramontana in the winter.

The visitor to Rome could now avail himself of the services of the "antiquarian" for posting him up in the antiquities. We are not told whether their instruction included the enlightening of the stranger respecting the "trash" which was frequently offered him as specimens of the antique. Almost every town, we are told, had its local guide-book describing everything to be seen, good, bad, and indifferent.

<sup>1</sup> One traveller gives the cost of five rooms here as 16 sequins (zecchini), about £6 a month. The board cost each person a sequin and a half *per diem*.

The books about Italy continued to be written partly by the gentlemen travellers, partly by the tutors who sometimes accompanied them. The general character of these eighteenth-century travels can be guessed from what has been said. It was an age of diary-writing; and, as we may see from a letter of Johnson to the daughter of his friend in Rome, every traveller in Italy was expected to keep something in the nature of a methodical record. Precise rules were laid down for this serious performance, one being that notes are to be copied from the pocket-book into the journal before the traveller goes to rest. Into these records there was apt to steal much more than personal observation, as when one traveller jots down the "hearsay" that in Rome the clergy are three to one.<sup>1</sup> Sir Joshua Reynolds tells us that when he was once in the Vatican he saw some Englishmen spend six hours in writing down whatever the antiquary dictated to them, scarcely ever looking at the paintings for themselves.<sup>2</sup> Little wonder that Walpole should have called the cataloguing "a vile employment." Nor did he stand alone in thinking poorly of the books. Dr. Johnson, although he had a pretty sturdy stomach for travel literature, tried, in a moment of uncomfortable repletion, to dissuade Boswell from adding to the numbers of the books by reminding him that most modern travellers in Europe who have published their travels have been laughed at. Later on Heine expressed the growing feeling of weariness by saying that "there is nothing so stupid on the face of the earth as to read a book of travels in Italy, unless it be to write one." To the satisfaction of making

<sup>1</sup> This wild assertion is pounced upon by M. Russell, who knew his Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by H. N. Maugham, *The Book of Italian Travel*, p. 38.

your own list there was sometimes added the more piquant satisfaction of setting a predecessor right, as when De Blainville corrects Misson and others as to the number of steps in the amphitheatre at Verona, which, he assures us, he had counted three times.

The dreariness of most of the published diaries is what might be expected from the mode of writing them. They read almost like the jottings of an inventory, save that they have much less of emotional comment than a salesman's list. There is to be found in them as little of fine analysis as of concrete description—in the sense of a vivid presentation of an object as a whole. In their attention to parts and disregard of wholes they remind one of the child's cataloguing manner of drawing.

The first of the books to be noted is Addison's well-known *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, etc. (travelled, 1701-3), which gives a pleasant glimpse of the eighteenth-century gentleman and scholar in the classic land. He may shock us now and then, as when he cheerily dismisses the richly decorated Renaissance Carthusian monastery of Pavia as Gothic; and he sometimes amuses us, as when he deplores the prodigious pains and expenses that our forefathers have been at in rearing such a barbarous structure as the Cathedral of Siena. Yet we follow him sympathetically when he remarks on the shameful misgovernment of the Spanish regime in Naples, when he exposes the famous miracle of St. Januarius as one of the most bungling tricks he had ever seen, and when he chooses to travel from Rome to Terracina by land with Horace and back again by boat with Virgil.

The tour of another distinguished English visitor

early in the century (1717, 1718), Bishop Berkeley, as tutor to a young Scotch laird, included an exploration of Sicily on foot. The young philosopher directed a minute curiosity to quaint, out-of-the-way things, such as the virtues of tar-water—a theme to be turned to speculative purposes later—the precise changes observable in the smoke as it issued from Vesuvius, and the precise variations of the crops noticeable in the soil over which he tramped. He pried, too, into the pretensions of a certain dance, the Tarantella, as an antidote to the bite of the tarantula (Tarantian spider). The general ignorance of the eighteenth-century traveller respecting the Italian peasantry is strikingly illustrated in Berkeley's hasty generalisation, apropos of the pretty action of a boy who made a present of some herbs to one of the company in a church and refused payment: it was an incident, he thought, "not to be matched in Italy."

A book of travel by an unknown writer, E. Wright, who journeyed in France and Italy in 1721–2, illustrates some of the changes which Italian travel was now slowly undergoing. Among other things it speaks of growing taste for purchasing statues and pictures; it tells an amusing story of how the party, on leaving Ravenna, got a double *fede*, or bill of health: one to certify that they were in good health to frank them on their road, another to say they were ill, so that they might get "grasso" (meat). He actually resorts to a simile when describing the lava stream of Vesuvius, comparing it—possibly in ignorance of glaciers—with the Thames after a great frost when frozen into irregular and rugged heaps. He illustrates by a drawing a curious mode of ferrying across the Po: the ferry-boat being fastened by a long rope, which is supported by a series of small



boats, to an anchor or stake, and made to swing across the river by the current.

With this growth in intimacy of knowledge there appeared a tendency towards specialisation in the Italian travel-book. This is seen in the publication of *An Account of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings, and Pictures in Italy, etc.*, by John Richardson, a portrait painter (1722).



MODE OF FERRYING ACROSS THE PO IN 1721.

In even a short sketch of Italian travel one cannot omit the interesting figure of Montesquieu, whose *Voyage en Italie* (travelled 1728, etc.) illustrates at its best the wide-ranging, scientific curiosity of the eighteenth-century traveller. It is full of close observations on mechanical contrivances, social customs, etc. The writer shrewdly remarks that in Rome it is not women, but priests, who give the tone. He pokes his French fun at the English craze for carrying off pictures, statues, etc.; maliciously adding that, happily, they rarely take what is good.



The travels of the college friends Gray and Walpole (1739, *etc.*) have left a disappointingly meagre record. Walpole, though he had a germ of appreciation for some aspects of Alpine scenery, and did not stoop to the ignorant rejection of everything "gothique," was lacking in the warmer sentiments which make wandering in Italy a delight for most of us. The one thing he really cared for, elegant and entertaining society, though he coquetted with it at Florence, he did not find satisfying in Italy. Gray had a feeling for nature much in advance of his age, discerning even in the Alpine scenery which repelled our ancestors "something fine remaining amidst the savageness and horror"—even though he, too, was far enough from our point of view when we feel gloriously uplifted by the lofty peaks.<sup>1</sup> He has a pretty touch when he describes the cascade of Tivoli, tumbling headlong down like a heedless chit. Still fresher is the first expression of an Englishman's delight in the Neapolitan children—"a jolly, lively kind of animals," the little brown ones "jumping about half naked, and bigger ones dancing with castanets while others play on the cymbal."

The *Letters from France and Italy* of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu are only noteworthy as the attempt of a woman who had made her home in Italy to register her impressions. Intrinsically they have but little value, though they give us an amusing picture of the farcical aspect, both of the raw "young bears" and of their ignorant "leaders," who then overran Italy. Her remarks on the precious guide-books produced by the latter are sufficiently scathing. The interval, in point of sociability towards natives, between

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gosse calls Gray, surely with a touch of hyperbole, the first of the Romantics (*Gray*, p. 32).

the eighteenth and the twentieth-century Englishwoman in Italy may be measured by the difference of attitude between this resident in an abandoned castle at Lovere ("Louvere") and a lady who has recently described a similar domestic experiment.<sup>1</sup>

As Lady Mary's letters remind us, the fashion of sending English youths to Italy under the guardianship of tutors continued through the eighteenth century. It had, indeed, almost ceased to be seriously opposed. The absurd plea for insular stay-at-home patriotism of the versifier Gilbert West, *On the Abuse of Travelling* (about 1748), who has to go far for his arguments, as when he asks—

". . . What Arts polite  
Did the young Spartan want his deeds to grace?"

could, one supposes, only have been read by a few elderly and abnormally fidgety aunts. On the other hand, the idea of taking boys in their teens to Italy was ridiculed, not only by Lady Mary, but by Steele in the *Spectator*, where he speaks of the absurdity of taking a boy from school "to travel in his mother's lap"—a paper which Johnson in one of his morose fits pronounced "quite vulgar."<sup>2</sup> Some grotesque consequences of the custom are ruthlessly exposed in a curious pamphlet, *The Bear-Leaders, or Modern Travelling stated in a proper Light* (1758). The tour of "Bear" and "Bear-Leader" is here described by a would-be improver as "a progressive cause of Laughter." The governor is selected, not for his qualities, but for his cheapness. He and his charge when introduced to one another begin by starting back in mutual

<sup>1</sup> See *Home Life in Italy*, by Lina Duff Gordon.

<sup>2</sup> See *Spectator*, number 364. cf. Pope, *Dunciad*, Bk. iv.

astonishment, after which they acquire a coarse fondness for one another expressed by horse-laughs, or alternate thumps on the back.

Towards the middle of the century English art students were to be found in Rome. M. Russell, the painter, gives in his letters one of the first accounts of Herculaneum, and a word of praise to the dainty Villa Madama outside Rome, its garden and fountain apparently less ruined then by exposure than they are to-day. A better-known name is that of Joshua Reynolds, who worked in Rome in 1750, and was bold enough to set traditional forms at defiance by caricaturing Raphael's *School of Athens*. Another English artist in Italy about this time, the historical painter, James Barry, noted the picturesque costume of the peasants of the Roman Campagna. The inquirer into contemporary Italian music also travelled in Italy in the shape of the celebrated Dr. Burney (1770).

The slow growth of a more generous appreciation of Italian art during this period is evidenced by other than English books of travel. The President De Brosses, for example, though a genuine son of his age and holding the opinion that the paintings of the Bolognese School were the finest art, and that Bernini was the great Italian sculptor, could find room for words of appreciation for so little-known a painter as Giorgione.

The re-establishment of European Peace in the early years of the second half of the century appears to have been followed by a large efflux of the English nobility on the grand tour. Among a number of books which now appeared may be mentioned the *Letters from Portugal, Spain, Italy, etc.*, of Christopher Hervey, who was one of the first to penetrate into the more secluded

parts of Italy, sojourning at Bibbiena in the Tuscan Apennines, from which place he climbed the "Monte Alverna"—now La Verna—to the convent where St. Francis of Assisi had done penance.<sup>1</sup>

A new type of guide-book now made its appearance, planned on a larger scale and having more of the orderly arrangement of our own guides. A good example is *The Grand Tour* of Dr. Thomas Nugent (3rd edition, 4 vols., 1778), written, he tell us, not for the "sedentary reader," but as a companion for the traveller. It indicates the extension of the Englishman's tour, speaking not only of Perugia and Perugino's work, but of Orvieto, of Gubbio, and even of the Etruscan remains at Chiusi. Another book of similar aim is *The Gentleman's Guide in the Tour through Italy*, by Thomas Martyn, a Cambridge don (published anonymously in 1787), in which the author throws light on the way of producing books on Italy, by assuring us that he only consulted the works of the "esteemed writers" after looking over extracts from his own journal.

The English traveller of this period must have been well supplied with guide-books, which included translations of foreign books. In addition to the four volumes of J. G. Keysler's *Travels* (1758), our tourist was able to consult the six volumes of the Abbé Richard's *Description Historique et Critique de l'Italie*, a useful if rather dry storehouse of information, as well as the eight volumes of Father Lelande's *Voyage d'un François en Italie* (1769), a very methodical and comprehensive treatise, dealing at some length with Perugino's work and with the ancient mosaics at Ravenna.

<sup>1</sup> "Alverna" or "Alverno" is Dante's "crudo sasso intra Tevere ed Arno," *Paradiso*, XI, 106. In Wordsworth's poem, *The Cuckoo in Lacerna*, the name assumes yet another form.



It is refreshing to pass from these somewhat dull records to the lively impressions which Oliver Goldsmith has left, scattered about in his various writings, of his tour in Switzerland and North Italy (in 1755, 1756). If his wanderings did not carry him farther south than Florence, they brought him into friendly contact, not only with the universities and monasteries, where he was wont to earn a lodging by learned disputations, but presumably with the Italian peasants. The sound of his flute, as he passed down the southern slopes of the Alps, may be said to have heralded the fuller delight of many a later traveller.

The coming age of specialisation in the knowledge of things Italian is presaged by the famous researches of Winckelmann, who in 1758 made a scientific examination of the ruins of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Paestum. What a stride forward his researches meant may be seen by comparing their results with what one finds in John Richardson's book on Italian statuary referred to above, which Winckelmann considered to have been the most complete work up to his time.

Dr. Johnson, though he himself in vain wished and even planned to go to Italy, had many friends who were Italian travellers. Among these was Giuseppe Baretti, a naturalised Englishman, whose principal book, an *Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy*, was written as an answer to the *Letters from Italy* of Samuel Sharp (1765 and 1766). These letters are chiefly remarkable as an exhibition of two of the least amiable characteristics of the British traveller in Italy at that time, a disparagement of most things Italian, from its climate to its people and their customs, as being immeasurably inferior to the English pattern, and an unblushing flunkeyism. The former tendency prompted him to condemn what



he did not understand, and sometimes grossly misrepresented, in the manners of Italian society. The two tendencies together led him to write about the grievances of peer and peeress in having to lie in uncomfortable Italian beds<sup>1</sup> as if he were the *avant-courier* of a prince returning to his dominions, for whom everything is ill prepared. This pretentious and ignorant performance was fine quarry for a man like Baretti, who knew his Italy; and he gave the hasty slanderer of his country the trouncing which he had richly deserved. The only excuse for Sharp is that he was out of health, and, though a physician, evidently one unable to heal himself.

The year 1763 saw a curiously contrasting couple of famous Englishmen in Italy, Tobias Smollett and Edward Gibbon. The *Letters* of Smollett present us with the mournful yet not infrequent spectacle of a traveller in Italy whose ill health blackens almost all his impressions. The best that can be said of him is what Mr. Seccombe says in his Introduction to the *Letters*, that they give us "an unrivalled picture of the seamy side of foreign travel." At Rome Smollett met Laurence Sterne, the fellow-novelist whom he had censured. Edward Gibbon thought a year's reading at Lausanne not too long a preparation for the understanding of Rome. His account of how the first idea of his great work thrilled through him, as he sat musing among the ruins of the Capitol, is one of the undying utterances on Italy. Gibbon summarised the qualifications for profitable travelling as "age, judgment, a competent knowledge of men and books, and a freedom from domestic prejudices."

<sup>1</sup> The beds to-day are one of the chief recommendations of the Italian inn.

In 1767 and following years Richard Payne Knight sojourned in Italy. He travelled in Sicily with a German painter and wrote a journal of the tour, which Goethe honoured by embodying it in his biography of the latter. Knight made a special study of ancient bronzes, gems, etc., and he acquired a certain vogue, and some ridicule, as a writer on Taste and an "arbiter of fashionable *virtù*."

Dr. John Moore, friend and biographer of Smollett, travelled five years with the young Duke of Hamilton (1772, etc.). He wrote intelligently of Italy, making one of the rare allusions to Italian literature when, apropos of Ferrara, he mentions the Este family and Ariosto, and showing himself more "simpatico" than most travellers towards the Italian people, as when he says a good word for the Roman girls who hire themselves as models. He tells an amusing story of a Scotsman who, when asked to admire the view of the Alban Lake, replied, "Have you seen Loch Lomond?"—a story which illustrates how persistent are some of the tourist's ways.

The last decade of the century produced a couple of notable books of Italian travel by women. The *Letters* of Lady Anna Miller (travelled 1770–1), though they have little of the finer appreciation, may entertain the reader of to-day, pitched as they are to a considerable extent in the rollicking key of a school girl who is amused at everything new and strange. This lady gave a feminine turn to the metrical craze of the time by ruthlessly measuring the fair Venus di Medici from the roots of her hair to her heel. She tells some good stories, as that of the awkward fix she was put into in a Roman drawing-room when the Pretender walked up and addressed her. The value of the æsthetic judgments

of the age can be measured to some extent by her remark that the temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli illustrates the lines insisted upon by Hogarth in his theory of beauty. She seems to have enjoyed her exciting whirl over the Apennines behind four of the largest and most furious horses she had ever seen.

A more enlightened insight into Italian character and life is revealed in the *Observations and Reflections, etc.*, of Mrs. Piozzi, formerly Mrs. Thrale (travelled in 1784, etc.). The book has outlived the contemptuous remarks of Horace Walpole; and even to-day, when read after the dull and depressing diaries of the century, it has the charm of a cultured feminine perception. It has, moreover, the germ of a style—so painfully lacking in most of the productions of the period. This lady's eye caught something of the picturesque side of the rugged scenery of the Alps, and she writes prettily of the little towns sticking on the cliff, and of the light clouds sailing under their feet. With a rare breadth of observation, she notes the intellectual shrewdness and arch penetration in the faces of the friars, and even the eloquence of the beggars who force their deformities on the traveller's eye. She likes the naturalness, simplicity, and absence of pretence in the Italian, who has "no impertinent desire of appearing what one is not," and among other things praises his theatres as immeasurably superior to the English.

In the Letters of W. Beckford, who was in Italy about the same time (1780–2), the reader's ear catches yet more clearly the distant notes of the coming traveller's song of delight. When he is approaching the Venetian State, execration at the villainous roads is drowned in admiration of the picturesque valley, overgrown with junipers and strewn with fragments of rock, where he

feels compelled to halt and climb the crags in order to feast his eyes on the gorgeous flowers, butterflies, and flies. He shows himself well in advance of the age of prose and reason when he expresses delight in the hazy vapours through which the sun casts an oblique and dewy ray. He is among the first to record that happy repose of spirit with which Italy blesses the lover of her solitudes. He found it in the Apennines when, after tying up his horse to a cypress tree, he stretched himself on the ground among the arbutuses and looked out over the sea, and afterwards partook of a frugal lunch, consisting of a bunch of grapes which he had brought with him and of the chestnuts which he could shake down with his crooked stick.

Other than English travellers in Italy about this time need not detain us. De Blainville's *Travels* (1757) show solidity of learning and shrewdness of observation, and tell us much of national customs and church ceremonies. Duclos' *Voyage en Italie* (travelled in 1767) displays a worthy sentiment for the antiquities of Rome, and gives us the curious bit of information that Misson's book had been put on the Index. A more entertaining book is the *New Observations on Italy* of Pierre Jean Grosley (translated by T. Nugent, 1769). It shows a wide range of travel, much fine observation of art, and careful inquiry into popular customs. He is one of the first to call attention to the Italian frescoes, having been "perfectly astonished" on seeing in the Chapel of St. Mark's at Florence some frescoes on the old walls, as he was told, "by one Fra Angelico." The *Letters* of Martin Sherlock (travelled 1776, etc.) contain the interesting fact that a gentleman could now live in Venice and keep a servant at a cost of £70 a year.

Among German writers who visited Italy during this



period is Herder (travelled about 1769). If he had not been consumed with *Heimweh* he might have revelled in much that Italy could have shown him of those primitive stages of life and culture which he was one of the first to investigate. Lessing, who was in Italy in 1775 as companion to the young Prince Leopold of Brunswick, was home-sick too, not, like Herder, for a young wife, but for a *fiancée*, Eva König, and he left nothing worth reading respecting his journey. German writers of the latter part of the century supplied books of the old prosy form and texture. The *Essay* of Count Berchtold gives us a wondrous list of questions, "interesting to Society and humanity," to be put by the travellers to men of all ranks; and the *Travels* of Count Leopold Stolberg, which is marked by all the pompous superiority of the eighteenth-century gentleman, labours its dreary lists of objects seen, and the rest, only rarely breaking its attitude of cold detachment by a note of German *Schwärmerei*, as when it speaks of "the heavenly beauty" of an Assumption of Guido Reni. The Olympian figure of Goethe cannot fail to impress us, as with a large serene vision he surveys Italy after years of longing (1786-8). Like other beauteous maidens, Italia obligingly contributed to his culture, breathing on him the calming influence of her classical art.<sup>1</sup> But even this universal genius was bound by the fetters of his time, and he almost amuses the reader of to-day by growing enthusiastic over things like the Grotto of S. Rosalia outside Palermo, while remaining coldly insensible to so much that we prize as part of the treasure of Italy.

<sup>1</sup> The impression made on the poet is to be studied in the *Italienische Reise*, together with the *Römische Elegien*.



In spite of these late survivals of the manner of the eighteenth-century gentleman, the attitude of the visitor to Italy was slowly undergoing a change. As we have seen in the case of Gray, Goldsmith, and others, men began to break through the artificial barriers of the prevalent elegant taste, and this new spirit waxed stronger towards the end of the century, as we see in W. Beckford. The age of classicism was passing. Poets like Gray, Cowper, Burns, and Crabbe had been feeling their way to a freer and more natural view of things. The change was furthered by that revolution in thought which was ushered in by Rousseau in the early fifties—the envisagement of civilisation and culture as something artificial and degenerate, and the setting up in its place of simple unadulterated nature. About the same date the idea of evolution received definite shape from the speculations of Buffon. This tended to develop a new attitude, which formed a striking contrast to that of the self-sufficient, illuminated person : a keen interest in old things, such as popular legends and romances, the beginnings of language, religion, and the rest. The French Revolution gave a greater impetus to the movement, dealing the *coup de grâce* to the eighteenth-century gentleman's comfortable sense of self-completeness, and to his contempt for the unilluminated herd. This change, more fully realised in the nineteenth century, gradually transformed the ways of the traveller in Italy. The country began to be appreciated for other things than its classic art—for its old romantic castles, for its natural scenery, for its peasantry, and for the earlier and more naive stages of its art. It began to disclose itself as an object, not for cold admiration, but for love.

Before the century had passed and Napoleon had

arrived in Italy to frighten away the travellers from the North, the country was visited by an Englishman who sounded in clearer tones the warmer note of greeting. The foot tour of the Cambridge undergraduate, William Wordsworth, with his Welsh college friend, through France, Switzerland, and the North of Italy (in 1790), described in the noble lines of the sixth Book of the *Prelude*, brought a new temper into the traveller's survey of continental nature. This may be seen by comparing the young poet's feeling on approaching the Chartreuse with that of Gray when, about the same age and also accompanied by a college friend, he found himself face to face with this mountain solitude. Wordsworth viewed it with mixed feelings, for it was the moment when the French Revolution (to which he then gave a passionate welcome) was carrying out the expulsion of "the blameless inmates." The new sentiment for the beauties of the Italian scene is clearly expressed in his verses on Como, that "serene accord of forms and colours," in which the poet touched on the Italian mode of counting the hours . . .

". . . the clock  
That told with unintelligible voice,  
The widely parted hours."<sup>1</sup>

Italian travel in the nineteenth century is a large subject calling for separate treatment. A word or two, indicating the main directions of its development, must suffice here.

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's impressions are to be gathered from the *Descriptive Sketches* and the *Prelude*. His later tour in 1820 is recorded in *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* (Lord Morley's edition of *The Works of Wordsworth*, pp. 580 ff). A description of the Simplon Pass comes into both records.

During the continuation, with some interruptions, of the Napoleonic occupation of the country, but few English or other travellers visited Italy. James Forsyth ventured into the country (1802-3) to study antiquities, but he paid dearly for the experiment by a long captivity in France. Chateaubriand went to Rome in 1803 as Secretary to the French Embassy, afterwards writing his *Souvenirs d'Italie*. He brought an eye for the much-belied Roman Campagna, admiring the beautiful lines of the horizon, the distant objects softened by mist, and the modulations of colour in the plain. Madame de Staël, fleeing from the regime of Napoleon (1804), took refuge in Rome, where she saw something of the human and expressive side of the antique stones, speaking of an obelisk which carried a thought of man even to heaven, and noting the quaint juxtapositions of the ancient and the modern. In the same year Kotzebue visited the country, giving us one of the first detailed accounts of Pompeii, and indicating the new feeling for nature by recommending the traveller to walk over the Apennines.

After Napoleon's power had been finally broken at Waterloo, a swarm of long-delayed travellers came into Italy. The English tourists appear to have been still, for the greater part, a continuation of the eighteenth-century type. "Milord Inglese" still rolled leisurely into Italy in his *calèche*, and Heine outlined his appearance with a touch of half ironical admiration. He continued to carry with him his old point of view, as may be seen by a glance at *The Greville Memoirs*, where as late as 1830 the laudation of Domenichino, Guido Reni, and the rest is chanted with no diminution of fervour. He retained, too, his old unsociable habits, John Mayne (who travelled in 1814) telling us in his *Journal* that,

when some English entered the *salle à manger* where his party were eating, they met "perfectly à l'Anglaise without exchanging a word." Yet, on the whole, Englishmen now appeared to be growing more popular, perhaps on account of their part in crushing Napoleon. Even the Pope relaxed his attitude, and, shutting his eyes, allowed them to build their church in Rome. Among the real admirers of the English was Stendhal, who writes very favourably of their parties at Rome and Naples.

With respect to the changes in Italy, the first thing to be noted is that Napoleon had left behind two fine roads across the Alps, greatly facilitating the passage into the country. His departure, after having instituted a regime which had certainly tended to awaken a desire for national unity, cast her back to be parcelled out among Austrian, Bourbon, and the other foreigners. Many of her art treasures had gone to France never to return.<sup>1</sup> The Universities at this time were in a state of decadence: Padua, which in her glorious days had numbered 18,000 students, having now only 400. As regards the antiquities, little had been done in the way of excavation, or of clearing the ruins. Excavations of the Forum began in 1803,<sup>2</sup> and went on interruptedly, though they were unsystematic and quite inadequate. The Palatine, we are told by Chetwode Eustace, consisted of mere heaps of ruins, among which you might now and again catch sight of a wandering fox.

Yet, in spite of these drawbacks, the impulse to visit the country was being fed by new interests. Artists, among others, Turner, Lawrence, Eastlake and

<sup>1</sup> Some were restored, and Mrs. Hemans wrote a poem on them.

<sup>2</sup> See Ch. Huelsen, *The Roman Forum*, p. 46. The first scientific excavation had been made in 1788, *ibid.*, p. 44.



Etty, came to study and paint in Rome, and found an enlightened patron in the Prussian resident, Karl Wilhelm von Humboldt. The journey to Italy began to be made, too, by a number of men of letters and others who have handed down to us a considerable diversity of vivid personal impression.

Amongst the first of these was Walter Savage Landor, who came (in 1814) for what was to be a long sojourn in Italy. He proved to be a very *difficile* person, apt to quarrel with marquises and to insult magistrates, and otherwise giving much trouble to his English friends, though he seems to have asked Italy's forgiveness in his lines, "Farewell to Italy." Stendhal's long stay (1814-21) was fruitful of more than one literary impression. The poem of Samuel Rogers (in Italy, 1815) is marred by many banal passages, such as its opening question, "Am I in Italy?" and again, "I am in Rome;" yet it was honoured by illustrations from the pencil of Turner. Lamartine, who was much in Italy at this time, travelled on foot, and among other things noted the picturesque aspect of the Colosseum overgrown with ivy and other plants. Thomas Moore's *Rhymes of the Road* (in Italy, 1819) is chiefly interesting as an expression of the new English attitude towards the setting up of a foreign tyranny in Venice.

About the year 1818 there appear among the travellers two notable figures, poets and friends, both driven by home trouble to the "Paradise of Exiles." Byron carried thither his wounded spirit together with his genius, and has left us one of the undying pæans on Italy in the well-known fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*. Shelley, too, in his letters and his poems, has given us masterpieces of the descriptive art, from a vignette of a Tuscan farm up to the well-known pictures of the Baths



of Caracalla and other Roman ruins, some of them interwoven with recollections of walks and talks with Byron. Another English poet, Keats, who came to Italy (1820) stricken with a mortal malady, arrived just in time to catch a glimpse of the beauty of the Bay of Naples, though too late to write even a swan-song on the fair land. In 1822 Leigh Hunt visited Italy, joining Byron and Shelley in a literary venture; and he added, both before and after his sojourn, his quota to the finer sort of writing on Italian subjects. One more of the poets destined to suffering came in 1828 in the shape of Heinrich Heine. He received a shock at the Cathedral of Trent, when all the great Italian eyes looked at him. He brought his playful fancy as well as his irony with him, enjoying a talk with the lizards. Another German visitor (in 1830) was the young musician Mendelssohn, who in the *Letters* expresses the new enthusiasm for the Venetian painters, and tells us of the artists in Rome, who now forgathered in the famous Café Greco. Bunsen (who had in 1823 succeeded Niebuhr as Prussian Ambassador) was now in Rome, and no doubt helped to make things agreeable for his talented young countryman. America sent about the same time the young professor, Longfellow, who spent three years and more in Europe before entering on his duties (1826-9).

Scott adds his name to the list of those who went to Italy out of due time (1831-2). He was too feeble in health to see much: contenting himself in Rome with the characteristic yet half-pathetic choice of a visit to St. Peter's to see the tomb of the last of the Stuarts. A year or two after Scott's visit there appeared the strange pair of literary temperaments, George Sand and Alfred de Musset, to live their short romance before

giving to the world their passionately diverse accounts of its rupture. Early in the thirties, too, Italy was visited by another imaginative writer, Hans Andersen. He observed its life with tender insight, and has left us a striking picture of it in the *Improvisatore*. This work contains an amusing sketch of the typical English tourist; who, on failing to get his demands for horses promptly attended to, "finally knotting up his pocket-handkerchief into a night-cap, threw himself in a corner of the carriage, closed his eyes, and resigned himself to his fate." Young Macaulay, who made the Italian tour in 1838-9, travelled severely alone, not only taking pains to avoid the English crowd, but rather contemptuously rejecting the proposal of a custom-house officer at Terracina, to whom he had appeared to betray a generous heart by a handsome bribe, that he should share his carriage on the next stage.

To meet the needs of the new invasion of tourists, new guide-books were produced, differing from those of the preceding century in being mostly by women, and in showing something of feminine quickness of perception and vivacity of manner. One of these was *Travels in Europe* by Mariana Starke, which reached its eighth edition in 1833. She is a little exclamatory in manner, and she not only stars things in the fashion of Baedeker, but adds notes of exclamation, one, two, three, and sometimes even four. Yet she is not wanting in a perception of the picturesque, and calls attention to such overlooked Italian gems as the mediæval ruins of Ninfa. Lady Morgan (travelled in 1819, 1820), in her once famous *Letters*, not only uses notes of exclamation, but prints the names of such awesome things as Faun and Gladiator in capitals. She has a rapturous outburst over Carlo Dolce, and indulges

in much cheery gossip about Italian society. Close on this lady's heels came the Countess of Blessington (travelled 1822, 1823), who in *The Idler in Italy* is apt to be gushing, and shares in the fondness for society lore. The style of these books may be illustrated by the following: "What striking contrasts, when mutually compared, do the pictures of Raphael and Titian offer." Lady Murray's *Journal*, published in five volumes in 1836, contains a wide range of information, but savours too much of the old unselective cataloguing.<sup>1</sup>

As a set-off to these rather superficial performances of the ladies, we get early in the century a more specialised sort of guide written by the expert. The first noteworthy books on the classical ruins are the *Remarks on Antiquities*, etc., by James Forsyth (second edition, 1816), *A Classical Tour Through Italy*, by Rev. John Chetwode Eustace (first edition, 1813), and *A Classical Tour through Italy and Sicily*, by Sir R. Colt Hoare (published in 1819). The germ of a more authoritative general guide-book appeared in the thirties in Murray's *Handbook for Travellers on the Continent*.

In the forties there came to Italy a new type of traveller and art-lover. The tour of 1844 which determined John Ruskin to write on Italy, is a momentous date in our history. His perversities and his obfuscations notwithstanding, all lovers of Italy owe him much of their deeper insight and of their more fervid enthusiasm. Among the artists now to be found in Rome was the child Fred Leighton, learning to draw and beginning to develop his love of Italy.

With this decade we reach the beginning of the

<sup>1</sup> About the same time Mrs. Jameson, the writer on Italian painters, travelled in Italy as governess and published an anonymous diary.

residence of the wedded poets, Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, both lovers and friends of Italy, serving her valiantly with the pen. Robert Browning, who had paid three visits to Italy before he took his wife there in 1846, not only reveals to us, in his poetic and profoundly original impressions, unsuspected meanings of Italian art, but makes the Italian people live for us in his dramatic portraits, in which passion and intellect alike are subjected to a fine and penetrating light, as of some magical X-ray. Mrs. Browning contributes in her poems some dainty vignettes of Italian scenery : making us see, among other things, the lizards with other eyes by naming them "the green lightnings of the wall." The brave but futile effort to establish a Republic in Rome in 1848 moved these and other visitors. Among them was Arthur Hugh Clough, who, though he went to Rome in poor health, and suffered much during the siege, managed in *Amours de Voyage* to write some notable verse on Rome,

"When from Janiculan heights thundered the cannon  
of France."

The growth among Englishmen of a new interest in Italy is shown in the enterprise of the newspaper in sending correspondents to the country. As early as 1824 William Hazlitt had been commissioned by *The Morning Chronicle* to write his *Letters*. The *Pictures from Italy* by Charles Dickens, a bright, characteristic bit of the novelist's writing, which, of course, included a description of the puppet theatres, first appeared in 1846. The *Impressions of a Wanderer*, by T. A. Trollope (travelled in 1847), which first appeared as Letters in the *Athenæum*, is a third example of the



journalistic attempt to bring Italy to the homes of Englishmen.

Among other visitors besides Englishmen during the forties, we may note Alexander Dumas (*père*), who travelled in the country about 1842, and afterwards embodied some of his impressions in his stories. In the years 1844 to 1847, Theodor Mommsen was travelling in Italy making observations for his great history of Rome. Another interesting German visitor was the novelist, Fanny Lewald, who in 1847 went to Rome and met her fate in the shape of another writer, Adolph Stahr, with whom she entered into a lasting relation similar to that entered into by George Eliot. She described her impressions of the country and people in *Das Italienische Bilderbuch*. From America there came the young poet, Bayard Taylor, who published (in 1846) a narrative of his grand tour in *Views Afoot, or Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff*. Very soon after there followed him Fanny Kemble (then Mrs. Butler) to find a "year of consolation" in the healing land. Although the Roman beggars repelled her, she was charmed by the picturesque ruins of the Campagna; and she was, perhaps, the first to discover one chief joy of the wanderer in Italy, the expansive and quickly responsive Italian boy.

By the fifties the building of railways had made some progress and facilitated the journey to Italy. About this time, too, there sprang up among Englishmen a warmer interest in early Christian and mediæval art. The new gospel of the Præ-Raphaelites, strongly backed by Ruskin, had a certain influence in developing this interest. Among the distinguished visitors of this decade we have Alfred Tennyson, who took his bride into North Italy, and refers to the visit in one or two



poems, and Théophile Gautier who wrote a fine description of Venice in *Italia*. Thackeray appears to have been in Italy in 1853-4. What he says in his *Book of Snobs* about the behaviour of Englishmen in the Toledo at Naples and in the crater of Vesuvius suggests that he may, at an earlier date, have visited Naples also. Among other than English travellers in the early fifties there came James Russell Lowell, who published his recollections in *Fireside Travels*. About the same date the historian Gregorovius was in Italy for some years, following up his travels with the publication of *Wanderjahre in Italien*. Another German writer of fiction, Paul Heyse, was also in Italy at this time, and he has given us in his *Novellen* a delightful memorial of his studies of peasant life in South Italy. The visit of Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1858 bore literary fruit in his charming romance, *The Marble Faun*. Other travellers were A. P. Stanley, whose letters contain a fine description of Ravenna, and the American G. S. Hillard, who gives us a clever account of a six months' sojourn in the country.

The sixties mark the triumph of the long struggle of the Italians for freedom and national unity. A number of noteworthy names appear in the list of travellers of this decade, of which it must suffice to mention a few. Henri Taine, in his *Voyage en Italie* (1866), illustrates, in its characteristic combination of observation with speculation, the influence of a new scientific spirit. George Eliot paid her longest visit to Italy, accompanied by George Henry Lewes, in 1860, just after completing her novel, *The Mill on the Floss*. At the Turin Railway Station she saw Cavour, who was just then anxious but hopeful, for Garibaldi was hatching his plot against the execrable Government of

the two Sicilies. The Leweses, it may be added, only just managed to get away from Naples before the hero and his Thousand landed in Sicily. She had an alert eye for the colour of the temples at Paestum, for the wild flowers, and for the Roman babies with their "wise eyes," as well as for their "grand-featured" mothers. In 1863 J. A. Symonds made his first acquaintance with Italy, returning again and again during the long exile to which delicate health condemned him. His brilliant sketches of Italian towns seen against their historical backgrounds are among the most delightful of the century's pictures of the country. In the year 1864 Ibsen went to Italy to recover from his disgust at the failure of his Christiania theatre, and at his countrymen's want of appreciation of his writings. Herbert Spencer's tour in 1868 appears to have been another illustration of the disappointment likely to be the portion of the unqualified visitor to Italy. His remarks on the false optics of Guido Reni's *Aurora* are a quaint example of the forcing of scientific principles upon art.

In the year 1870 in which "Italy entered Rome," as the inscription near the Porta Pia has it, the Mont Cenis Tunnel was opened, and the tour in Italy fell to the level of commonplace performances. It was then, too, that a systematic excavation of the Roman Forum began to be carried out, and that "New Rome" began to be constructed at the cost of the delightful Villa Ludovisi and other treasured heirlooms of the past—losses which Mr. W. D. Howells has recently told us are to be cheerfully accepted. Since then much has been done for the benefit of strangers; not only by the erection of hotels and other conveniences, but by the gathering into the safety of museums and picture-galleries of the precious things of art, by extending excavations,

by exposing to view long-covered frescoes, and so forth. The world has responded by sending its crowds of visitors, Americans as well as Europeans, many of whom have settled in Italy. This larger influx has made an end of the predominance of the English traveller, and reduced "milord" to the rank of a barely discernible figure, destined to live on, perhaps, only in novels from the pen of democratic worshippers of titles, who desire to give something of the old-world glamour to their imaginary flittings across Europe. We seem to get a final glimpse of him and his fox-hunting on the Campagna in Frances Elliot's *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* (1871), probably the last of the published ladies' diaries.

Much might be said about the characteristics of the latest and largest crowd of invaders. It is no longer predominantly English; and Heine's saucy complaint, that you could not imagine a picture-gallery without a mob of Englishmen, guide-book in hand, might now be turned into a retort upon his own countrymen. But the Germans, if apt to be a little loud in their manners, are probably the most studious and methodical of the new visitors. The American crowd has come too, and in the early summer greatly outnumbers the European travellers. These and the other foreign visitors supply a variegated scene, even if a less picturesque one than the cosmopolitan gatherings in Venice and in Rome some three or four centuries ago. It brings in amusing features, in the English tourist with his rather too easy gait and set of the hat, in the German with his curious modifications of the "jägertracht," and in the tall, straight, black-robed American, who has never mixed his languages and preserves a sublime self-possession in the midst of a world unrealised. As I have watched this last figure at some railway buffet, heed-

less of speeding minutes, repeating in louder and louder voice his demands to the Italian woman who would fain serve him, and listens with wondrous patience, gradually divining his need, the idea has occurred to me that he manages to get through in Italy because the natives, noting the black garb, the solemn mien, and the childlike innocence, must take him to be a "Santo."

The output of books on Italy during the last fifty years would take us beyond a sketch of travel in the country. They include, in addition to sketches like those of Mr. W. D. Howells, Mr. Henry James, and M. Paul Bourget, a large variety of scientific and technical treatises; histories and biographies; romances (dealing both with the grand world and with the peasantry of Italy); personal experiences of dwellers in the country, such as the attempt to plant an English garden in Italy; and flying impressions of travellers taken from bicycle or motor-car—not to speak of a multiplicity of guide-books, general and particular. Under the head of imaginative description we meet with a new *genre*, removed *toto cælo* from the naive, objective note-takings of earlier centuries, the records of emphatically individual impressions. They have brought in the telling concrete touches, as well as the emotional effect of what is seen, which were painfully absent in the eighteenth-century Travels. They are clearly a great advance, even though, in reading some of them, one may feel that the impressionist or post-impressionist manner adopted tends to the blurring of the clear visual outlines of objects, to an excessive caressing of one's finer feelings and to that preciousness of language which always follows a flooding of perceptions with sentiment.

On looking over the copious lists of these books one realises that the English traveller in Italy has to-



day a rich preparatory culture provided for him, eminently fitted to instruct the mind and to purge the temper of insular prejudices. And yet, one goes on to ask oneself, is the average tourist much better prepared than his predecessors? How many of our countrymen in Italy, one wonders, could decipher the historical meaning of the names so lavishly displayed in its cities, of the Via Caracciolo in Naples, for example, or the names in Rome which commemorate battles or other historical events? And how many, even among our settlers in the land, have managed to get into sympathetic touch with its people?

Another idea may occur to the student of recent Italian travel. What if this bountiful supply of books, together with photographs and coloured illustrations, should revive the old stay-at-home attitude, much denounced by the early advocates of travel? The last time I saw George Meredith he indulged, apropos of a continental journey projected by some friends, in some characteristically humorous remarks on the advantages of staying at home and reading of foreign places, thus avoiding the bad water, the rows of servants in the hotel waiting for tips, and so forth. Perhaps in these days of an ever-increasing swarm of invaders in Italy, more and more of the wiser of mankind will be of Meredith's opinion.

### III

## THE OBSESSION OF ROME

THE word "obsession" is apt to suggest something more or less abnormal, a dangerous restriction of thought and feeling within some limited field of interest to the disregard of other matters—especially those of greater practical moment. Yet there are absorbing preoccupations, cutting us off for a time from most of our habitual concerns, which may not only be as harmless as healthy dreams, but, as refreshing diversions of the spirit from customary affairs, may be distinctly recreative and beneficial. Of such are the happy obsessions into which some of us fall when travelling in a new country. We are laid hold of and filled for the time by what feeds and expands the soul. Whether that which lays its enchantment upon us is the peasant-life of Norway, the architecture of some old Flemish town, or the art of Venice or Florence, the self roves out into new paths, enlarging itself by a development of fresh ideas and fresh sympathies. Under the spell of such a new revelation, perception, imagination, and reflective thought acquire a new bent. Our present surroundings become for us our adopted world, and our old familiar one seems to recede into the dimness of a memory.

A spell that amounts to this engrossing and dream-like transportation of self to a new world is more than an ordinary fascination. In Italy, for example, we may

be fascinated again and again by a passing sight, such as a mother crooning over a child, a pair of cypresses piercing the glory of sunset, or a head in a Florentine picture, and yet never reach the more lasting and profound subjection of a mind obsessed. Such momentary fascinations may, to be sure, by contributing vivid impressions, minister to the growth of an obsession; yet even when they occur with some frequency they do not in themselves constitute it. He only is truly captivated by Italy who develops a strong attachment to her common features and her life as a large organic whole.

As having in it so much of the character of a fascination, this state of obsession comes not from a conscious and deliberate volition on our part. The charmed wanderer in Italy does not proceed with a set purpose to change his world in order to realise some practical end, as the young colonist, for example, resolves to change it. A man may indeed come to Italy with such a purpose, in order, let us say, to make his classical lessons more interesting to his boys, or to get subjects for his pictures, or to be on a par with the other members of his social set in respect of range of travel. Yet he only becomes obsessed by yielding to some constraining force from without, by a kind of falling in love with what he sees.

The charmed condition referred to here—the amateur's obsession as it may be called—differs, too, from the student's attitude when visiting such a country as Italy. The bewitched amateur may seek knowledge like the student. He may when in Rome imitate Goethe and become a serious student for a while. But he does not strive for knowledge for its own sake, but only as a means to a fuller joyous realisation of his new world.

As a dreamy contemplative activity sustained by

emotion, the attitude of a cultivated traveller in Italy is closely akin to that of a pure enjoyment of beauty. Recent writers on æsthetics have emphasised the point that in contemplating a beautiful picture or statue our mind passes into a kind of semi-illusory trance. Yet though the obsession of Italy is thus akin to a love of beauty, and is pretty certain to have the enjoyment of beauty as one chief constituent, the two are not quite the same. A man or woman with only a modest equipment of art-culture may fall in love with Italy and be strongly dominated by her charm. Although Italian art is much, it is but a part of that which draws us to her. There are, for example, all the allurements of her sunny climate, of her natural scenery, and of her fruits and flowers. Nor can the love of Italy be firmly rooted where there is no appreciation of her human life. How can all the enticements of the land be felt by one who has never got into touch with its people; never learned the beauty of its language by hearing it used, not only by the well-to-do, but by the common folk, with all its pretty, flattering ways; never picked up the meaning of a word from a charming use of it by a native, as when a peasant woman returns a "*Grazie Lei*" (i.e. "*Grazie a Lei*") to your "*Many thanks*," or does her best to excuse a bit of annoyance done you by a too intrusive boy when you are sketching, by pleading that he is "*maleducato*."<sup>1</sup> One is sorry for those who, though resident in Italy, never get to know the life and customs of the people, not even from the excellent studies of them in fiction, such as those of Ouida, G. Verga and Grazia Deledda.

<sup>1</sup> To Shelley the first delight on entering Italy came from a woman's utterance at Susa of "the clear and complete language of Italy after the nasal and abbreviated cacophony of the French."



Although the mood of obsession may rightly be called one of enjoyable contemplation, it does not exclude unpleasant ingredients. Shorter fascinations can, as we know, be exercised by things distinctly repellent—by sheer ugliness, for example, or by something horrible. Travel in Italy, as in Spain, will pretty certainly bring us face to face with what shocks and hurts us, with the beggars, for example, when they make a lavish display of their bodily deformities. But, like the artist, the lover of Italy knows how to make of the ugly a passing and subordinate element, which may even add a new attraction to the whole.

In order to be enfolded and rapt away by such an obsession the traveller must come prepared. As in the case of sexual love—the greatest of obsessions, perhaps—the old self must be ready for the enthralling embrace which is to enlarge and, in a way, to transmute it. This means, most obviously, an adequate intellectual preparation. The visitor to Italy, to whom her monuments and her art look hopelessly strange and void of meaning, necessarily misses the secret of her charm. One ought, perhaps, to pity the hordes of the unprepared whom one sees hurried through ruins, churches, and museums by their conductors; the more so, since, as if in irony, these guides give a finishing touch to the farce by clothing their explanations in execrable and barely intelligible English. They seem to appeal to pity not much less than the well-prepared, Dr. Johnson and others, who have longed to come to Italy but have been hindered.

This formation of the right comprehending attitude cannot be completed until we are in the country. For one thing, we are apt to get erroneous preconceptions of Italy. Our first dream of it is likely to

be coloured by our special predilections—whence the frequent note of disappointment on a first sight of Rome or other city. Nor does a fair amount of reading beforehand ensure the needed preparation. To reading must be added close and prolonged observation in the country itself. The old travellers, no doubt, read a good deal beforehand, but they also took their books to Italy to be read on the spot. Goethe says the best preparation for Rome must be got in Rome.

Yet, even when thus amplified, the intellectual preparation is not enough. Many of the young men who made the Grand Tour in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries read hard, and worked hard at sight-seeing, yet their dry cataloguing journals, so far from suggesting that they were spellbound, read like severely self-enforced tasks. A full and thrilling experience of the obsession presupposes a certain warmth of emotion, an impulse towards sympathetic self-expansion, as well as a predisposition to a dream-like contemplation of things. The typical young Englishman is perhaps too little emotional, or perhaps prides himself too much on his superiority to sentiment, to be easily obsessed in Italy. Not that the attitude here spoken of implies voluble utterance, to say nothing of "gush." The soul that begins to feel itself obsessed will often be hushed as if by some miraculous visitation. I have known women in Rome, both English and American, who could only speak of their new experiences in low tones to friends.

Since it is we ourselves who give direction and shape to the mood of contemplation, our responses to the common stimulus of Italy's charm will vary in character. The contemplative enjoyment of Italy is coloured in the case of each of us by his special likings, his special

knowledge, and his special bents of fancy. Every traveller in Italy who knows how to cull a plenitude of its delights has in him something of the selectiveness of the impressionist artist.

The obsession of Italy is a process having its stages and its gradual rise and development. At first, as ignorance or fanciful anticipation comes into contact with reality, there is apt to be a confusing sense of multiplicity. But soon the multitude of wonderful and alluring things begins to awaken a warm enthusiastic feeling. As these gradually get understood the germ of an *idea* of Italy, as delightful, charming, beautiful, forms itself, into which fit themselves, as into an organic system, the ever-accumulating impressions of her art, scenery, and life. The gradual enlargement and organisation of this idea brings, along with the intensification of certain emotions, such as wonder, and delight, the formation of a fixed permanent *sentiment* of love for Italy. As a result of this organisation of an idea sustained by a powerful sentiment we reach a state of intelligent clairvoyance. The growing domination of the attitude shows itself in two ways: in an increasing disposition to lapse into musing on what we see, both at the time and afterwards, and in a growing impulse to look out for fresh objects of perception which shall at once be illuminated by our idea and enrich it.

All varieties of this obsession imply, not only a charmed interest in the things seen, but the interpretation of these. The charm of the sensuous presentation needs to be supported by the more prolonged charm of its meaning. Such meaning takes on a peculiar prominence, and appeals to us with a peculiar force, in the case of a country like Italy so rich in relics

and suggestions of the past. It is, of course, well, if we would feel the whole extent of her enchantment, to take a sympathetic part in her deeply interesting present, to get into touch with her life, her literature, her national aspirations. Yet the Italy that most strongly draws the educated visitor is a record of the past. Her towns, churches, pictures, not to speak of older remains, are ever taking us back to times unlike our own; and no one can feel the full potency of her charm who fails to get into comprehensive and sympathetic contact with this past life.

Such a vivid reconstruction of the past as will bring us under the full spell of the great monuments of Italy must be at once intelligent and warmed with sympathetic emotion. We need to visualise with some clearness the wholes of which we see only the fragments, as, for example, the whole state of things, social, religious, and artistic, from which issued the art of Giotto or Botticelli. And we need hardly less to live over again the life imperfectly recorded in what we see: to move, for example, in pleasant reverie through the streets of Pompeii or other old city, with eyes, ears, and even tongue imaginatively active.

That past and present are both retained in this state of reverie is seen in the elegiac tone which is wont to come into our retrospective musings, a tone so characteristic of the writings of Pierre Loti. This element of sad regret seems to introduce something of unpleasant dissonance into our mood. We strive to give reality and life to the vanished scene, and our striving is thwarted by the recurring intrusion of a sense of its vanishment. In the end it seems as if we clung the more tenaciously to the past and its surviving vestiges, just because of these moments of disillusioning reflection.



In Italy the collision of present with past takes on certain differences according to the special circumstances. In the solitude of a wholly ruined city, such as Pompeii, I can shake myself free of the present and be more fully immersed in the past. One may approach this state of absorption in the past, too, in other places if one knows how to secure the absence of noisy sight-seers—for instance, in a frescoed chapel at Padua, Orvieto, or S. Gimignano, if not also, at a chosen hour, in such frequented places as Florence. But the tourist invasion of Italy is large and insistent to-day, and one must be prepared now and again to have one's musings broken, say by a "Lina!" shouted across the Greek theatre in Syracuse by a young Teuton who feels that the proper place for his "Braut" is at his side. Such shocks are apt to jerk one back into the modern world with a nasty heart-thump. How well I remember, on a visit to the painted chambers of the Farnesina, trying again and again to dodge three ladies, loudly loquacious over their Baedeker, and being unexpectedly and deliciously relieved by a long rebuking "sh!" from an Italian gentleman.

The full collision of the noisy present with the silenced past is experienced in Rome, which is at once the great storehouse of Italy's monuments, and her modern capital, the centre of her new stirring life. The brooder on her past finds here the maximum both of stimulation and of distraction.

Rome gathers up the main attractions of other Italian cities. Taken with its envioning Campagna, it almost competes with Naples in charm of romantic scenery. But it is in the number, magnitude, and splendour of its monuments, both its antiquities and

later relics, that it claims supremacy in the fascination of the stranger. What a thrill of awesome joy seems to be echoed by the very names "Forum Romanum," "Colosseum," "Baths of Caracalla," "St. Peter's," "The Lateran," "The Vatican," and the rest! It is in Rome and its vicinity that we see the great achievements of the world-builders. The capital has struck some as vast in its extent;<sup>1</sup> though the sense of vastness comes perhaps less from its visible area than from its intensive fullness, from the way in which it is packed with striking vestiges of the past. These monuments, moreover, while awe-inspiring in themselves, are much more so as standing for a long procession of ages reaching back to dim prehistoric times. Though other towns in Italy, e.g. Corneto, Ravenna, Palermo, Florence, may each uncover for us more of the work of a particular period, it is only the capital which bears one, as in an aeronautic sweep, down the great stretch of the ages.

Nor is it merely Italy's past which Rome thus epitomises in an eloquent language. Long the metropolis of Europe and of the known world, she tells us in her monumental records much of the history of civilisation. To one who realises this history but faintly the name "Rome" seems charged with large and momentous messages.

The fascination of Rome is an obsession in the fullest sense. Italy charms us, while Rome rather commands us to do homage. It overawes us by its greatness, and, while it fascinates us by its splendour, it repels us by its coarser and more brutal side. Our attitude has thus in it, together with a glad greeting of beauty,

<sup>1</sup> It impresses under this aspect a Londoner of to-day less forcibly than it impressed Shelley.

a dash of fear and of something akin to horror. The record gives us no intermediate shades of moral quality : it exposes the imposing extremes of human nature, at its best and at its worst.

Yet the magical city knows how to temper its masterfulness by awakening a subtle sense of kinship. It does not repel us by too much strangeness of aspect, as many Oriental cities might do. For one thing, its spectacle seems from the first half familiar. The Frenchman, the Englishman, and even the German feels at home in gazing on her temples, her porticoes, and other antiquities. This sense of familiarity face to face with her ancient architecture comes, not so much from the circumstance that other European countries besides Italy preserve architectural vestiges of her dominion, as from the fact that her classic art has had so long and so powerful an influence on that of Europe. Of the influence of the kinship of our languages, and of the overlappings of our history, both in ancient and in later days, there is no need to speak. The English wanderer in Rome who only remembers a decent quantity of his school and college lore, will often experience agreeable little shocks of recognition which make him feel that he is not far from home.

The statues in its museums exercise another kind of familiarising charm. Not only do they bring before our eye the patriot, the statesman, or the poet, of whom we have read and whom we seem to know, but they give us portraits which do not repel us by their foreign strangeness and their weird abstractedness, as Assyrian or Egyptian effigies are apt to do, but are of a type akin to our own race, and are at once recognisably human and individual, the finely modelled head reminding us at times of one of our own writers or statesmen.

The inscriptions, too, reveal now and again in a startling way the needed touch of Nature. One of these on the base of a tomb in the Via Salaria perpetuates, quite in the manner of Evelyn's Diary, a parent's record of the intellectual achievements of his precocious little son.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these familiarising traits, we feel that we have a rightful place in Rome, that we are visiting our own *Weltstadt*; or, as Montaigne puts it: in Rome "foreigners at once feel themselves the most at home." We are but following the long unbroken procession of travellers, the barbarians, the early scholars, the pilgrims and the rest. Byron expresses this sense of kinship in the line:

"Oh Rome! my country! city of the Soul!"

Yet Rome, if our mother, is our stricken mother. To complete the quotation from Byron,

"The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,  
Lone mother of dead empires!"

The great fascination of the eternal city has lain, and continues to lie, in its ruins. The view of them has touched men of different ages with a poignant regret. The spectacle of such vast erections, not unworthy images of her ancient and prolonged power, yet, as battered ruins, seeming to be sepulchral evidences of her passing, has disposed the visitor to a mood in which melancholy contributes a dominant note. The passing of things, even of those which seemed to be eternal, this is what gives the little spasm of pain to the obsessive grip of the spectacle.

Yet the attitude of the stranger towards these ancient

<sup>1</sup> See Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, pp. 280-2.



ruins has varied considerably from time to time. To the scholarly spectator of the Dark Ages, to Hildebrand, for example, Rome was "scarce aught but a ruin," that is to say, a gloomy and sinister scene of destruction. The splendour of its ancient buildings had vanished, and their remains revealed no pleasing aspect which might temper the sense of irremediable loss. To understand this sense of loss we must remember that the ruins were of vaster extent than those of to-day, and that they filled a much larger proportionate space in the unrestored and half desolate city. We must bear in mind, too, that these early sightseers had nothing of our modern feeling for the chastened beauty of broken arch, column and cornice, nothing of our sense of the picturesqueness of these remains as ruins. They confronted the eye as uncanny and hostile monsters. The popular imagination in those days viewed them, as it viewed mountains, as the haunt of dragons, and even scholars were not wholly free from a feeling of dread. On the other hand, the glorious city that had disappeared was much nearer to those early observers than to us. The destruction of the ancient city was, moreover, the more lamentable because there was no new Rome, nor any later civilisation to take its place. The attitude of the onlooker thus hardly amounted to the full joyous sort of obsession. There may have been a kind of weird fascination in the sight of the huge formless masses of wreckage, but the repellent force was too strong for a capture of the quiet, contemplative eye.

The note of lamentation over the lost splendour, as well as of indifference, if not of repugnance, to the surviving fragments, is heard again and again in later centuries. Even to Petrarch, who saw the first rays of the reviving splendour of art, Rome's ruins appear

to have presented themselves as something utterly wrong and deplorable. In the days of the fuller Renaissance, too, when in a sense ancient Rome lived again, the prevailing attitude towards the ruins was still one of oppressive sadness ; though the occasional direction of an angry protest against the further destruction of them by the appropriations of Popes and others suggests that a sense of some lurking value in the remains was awaking. How faint and sporadic this feeling was, however, is illustrated in the behaviour of Montaigne who effaced the ruins from his inspective programme with the contemptuous comment " nothing remained of Rome but its sepulchre." The visitors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had a keener quasi-scientific interest in the ruins, and some of them worked hard at inspecting and describing them. Yet it was not till towards the end of the eighteenth century, after Rousseau's great message had been delivered, that men began to see something of an imperfect beauty in broken arch, column, and entablature, and even in the great overgrown masses of crumbling masonry.<sup>1</sup> Just as men began at this date to exchange their attitude of suspicious dread towards wild and lonesome mountains for one of friendly interest and admiration, so they began to substitute for their attitude of recoil towards the weird, unclean ruins a tolerant and even agreeably interested one.

With this change there disappeared much of the old lamentation. In Byron its survival seems to take on something of a sentimental pose.<sup>2</sup> The new sense of the

<sup>1</sup> The poet Clough expresses an exceptional view when he says that the Roman antiquities are interesting only as antiquities and not for any beauty of their own. *Letters*, Vol. I, pp. 140, 141.

<sup>2</sup> George Sand protests against the sentimental regret in *La Daniella*, I, p. 63.

poetic value of the ruins, about whose nakedness trees and shrubs weave a fair mantle, is expressed in the descriptions of Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Shelley, and others.

For us of to-day the sight of these ruins, though still stirring something of the old regret, is bereft of much of its melancholy. Not only have we developed a new appreciation of their picturesque attractiveness, we have discovered a new way of envisaging the disappearance of the great products of human handiwork. For one thing, the antiquities in Rome have no longer a monopoly of the imposing past. To us Rome speaks of other things, changed if not ruined, yet preserving much of their former splendour, such as the great churches, and the palaces. Much more important is the change in our point of view with regard to the past. For us other ancient civilisations than that of Rome have disappeared. Again, for us the effacement of ancient Rome cannot mean what it meant for the visitors of the early centuries of our era, the total destruction of civilisation. We know that civilisation, though it may seem now and again temporarily paralysed, has perpetual life, and that this life will reveal itself in fresh national forms. We have between us and the deplored Roman magnificence all the consolations of new and splendid developments in architecture, in the modern art of painting, not to speak of science and mechanical inventions. More than this, we are imbued with the idea of human progress, of the variable yet uninterrupted current of evolution, and our eyes are turned more eagerly forwards to the coming enrichment of the race by new ideas and new institutions, than to the dead past. Our survey of the ruins of Rome has in consequence become largely a form of imaginative self-indulgence.



This new attitude towards ancient Rome has been influenced by the growth of the science of archæology. In the city of to-day we find the Colosseum and the other ruins shorn of the overgrowths which once delighted poet and artist ; and though this shearing may have injured their picturesque aspect, it speaks of a new care to preserve and cherish. And this care in preserving the heirlooms of the past affects the layman's sense of their artistic as well as of their historical value.

Rome presents to us of to-day a vaster scene than it presented to Evelyn or to Gray. If many things which they saw have been destroyed, many new sights have been added by the excavator and others. To glance at a good modern guide to Rome is to have a sense of bewilderment. To the unprepared, like George Eliot's heroine, Dorothy Casaubon, born before the admission of women to a classical trip, "the weight of unintelligible Rome" is apt to be oppressive ; and I have heard an American lady on her arrival in the city exclaim, "I am afraid of Rome."<sup>1</sup> Yet to the prepared, the very multiplicity and variety of her sights are delightfully stimulating.

Along with these differences between ourselves and the earlier visitors to Rome in respect of point of view and range of spectacle, there go notable differences in the conditions of our sight-seeing. The splendid remains of former ages are to-day walled in by new buildings, which have their own rather garish splendour and force themselves on our notice. Upon their solitudes there breaks the noisy torrent of a modern capital's life. As a consequence, the cultivation of the mood of quiet contemplation has grown more difficult for us, save in

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Rogers uses the same expression in his poem, *Italy*.



places lying in backwaters which the stream's commotion does not reach—such as may be found on and about the Cælian or Aventine, or towards the Porta S. Sebastiano, or in the lane just outside the city wall, over which lean out, from the gardens inside, heavy masses of dark foliage (see Frontispiece).

Not only does the clamour of the modern city thus surround us, we ourselves bring something of our age's commotion with us. The older travellers, other than pilgrims, visited Rome with one or two companions at most; our up-to-date tourists visit it in personally conducted crowds, the mere sight of which recalls the quiet contemplator to the noisy modern capital, to its hotels, to its photograph-shops, and the rest.

The hurried life of the hour holds us captive, too, in another manner. Our conception of a visit to Rome differs from that of such travellers as Evelyn and Addison. These made a long, serious study of the city, its treasures and its history, both before and during their visit. They made, too, a prolonged stay in it, often returning for a second inspection after going to Naples. Readers of Evelyn's *Diary* will remember how long and assiduously he attacked the problem of seeing the many sights of Rome. Dr. John Moore, an authority of the eighteenth century, tells us that a regular course with the "antiquarians" in Rome requires three hours a day for six weeks, adding that this is not enough, but that you must visit the antiquities again and again and reflect on them at your leisure.<sup>1</sup> All this must sound absurd to the hasty traveller of to-day. Yet in spite of the development of the amazing art of rushing across

<sup>1</sup> *A View of Society and Manners in Italy*, Vol. I, pp. 432 ff.

Rome, now practised by Americans and others,<sup>1</sup> the visitor who aims at gathering something better than a confused crowd of optical images will need in Rome to linger, to revisit and still revisit, to "waste" his time too in aimless potterings, knowing that a reward will not fail him.

The first thing that strikes the open, unprepossessed eye in a ramble through Rome is its great and perplexing diversity of aspect. The city's enclosing wall seems to have forced the "classes" and the "masses" into more than customary propinquity. In moving about, you pass, as in Naples, from a street with large houses and luxurious shops to a desolate region with a few miserable habitations. These dwellings may have stuck themselves on to fragments of buildings blackened by age, which strike the eye accustomed to a look of neat finish as strange and almost improper. The repeated intrusion of this informal feature arrests the visitor's attention, and he soon finds that, along with the transition from the elegant to the shabby, there goes another, from the relatively familiar modern type of house, church, etc., to things which look inchoate and out of place. For example, on glancing down at the angle of an eighteenth-century palace he notes a shapeless block of marble, just recognisable as the torso of a human body, thrusting itself up like some crouching beggar, the remnant of an antique group, long known to modern Romans as Pasquino. To the eye whose habits and standards have been formed in a modern city this

<sup>1</sup> The art of snapshotting the sights of Rome is not so new as it is often supposed. Dr. Moore gives an amusing story of a young Englishman who ordered a post-chaise and four horses and saw Rome in two days, managing, he adds, with a charming innocence, to equal his own list of pictures and statues.

kind of contrast will be the first to obtrude itself, and even the better-prepared sightseer can hardly overlook the appearance of so harsh a jostling of ill-assorted things. For all of us Rome begins to be different from other cities, a mighty giant unshackled by our conventional rules, just because it tumbles down its buildings in this harum-scarum fashion.

A little more wandering and inspection of things will show the visitor that this odd contrast between familiar and unfamiliar forms does not always coincide with that between what is fine and what is shabby. On walking down a narrow and dingy street near the Roman Forum you may suddenly come upon a trace of half-buried Corinthian columns, topped with a bit of projecting entablature. In this case it is the street which looks shabby and the queer-looking unfinished thing which acquires elegance and dignity.

From such experiences even an unread observer will divine that Rome is more than a city of to-day, that it is constructed of layers belonging to different ages and reflecting their dissimilar ideas and artistic manners. Other cities, no doubt, exhibit this contrast of new and old, but not on the same scale. The contrast extends beyond buildings to costumes and modes of life. The contadino from the Campagna jostles the tourist at the entrance of a church, while, inside, his wife or daughter kneels on the pavement near a lady attired in the latest fashion. Going down the Via Nazionale in a tram you may suddenly find your up-to-date vehicle entangled with an old-world type of cart, one of the pretty hooded ones which bring the wine from Frascati to Rome.

With growing familiarity the strange things thus intruding themselves into the show of modern Rome lose

all trace of the repellent. The spell of the old has begun to work on us. Our point of view has changed. Instead of viewing the old, unfamiliar things as unseemly, we rather view them as the things which have the real value, and their respectable surroundings as the things which are unpleasantly incongruous. In this new sentimental mood we are apt to grow impatient at the mere contact of our precious heirlooms with what is modern and commonplace.<sup>1</sup> We protest with especial warmth against the introduction of later artwork into buildings of great antiquity, for example the gruesome frescoes representing the agonies of martyrdom in the ancient church of S. Stefano Rotondo.

In its turn, this hostile rejection of the newer and later becomes itself toned down with enlarging observation and reflection. Little by little we learn, under the charm of the old, to blot out from the picture much which seemed to clash with the venerable relics of the past, or to see it only as a faintly apprehended background. There are, however, better ways of getting rid of the effect of these jarrings of incongruous elements in the mosaic of Rome's spectacle. We may learn in time to regard a blatant and aggressive-looking entourage as a foil to the cherished treasure; as when passing through a gateway near the Central Railway Station the scene of commotion, as goods are carted through the gate amid a clatter of voices, seems to intensify the look of imperturbable detachment and repose in the masses of the fragment of the wall of Servius Tullius lying close by. Something of the same

<sup>1</sup> George Sand makes one of her characters wish that the insur could be stripped of their modern surroundings. *La Daniella*, I, p. 103.



transmutation of aspect may be effected by envisaging the restless, hurrying visitors in one of the museums as if they were there to throw into relief the beautiful calm of the figure of some resting god, or slumbering nymph. To a playful fancy other alleviating aspects of these clashing juxtapositions disclose themselves. We see, for example, the ancient tomb as tenderly supporting the little house, or as embracing the Christian chapel, that has been built upon or within it; or the depositories and even little houses which, up to a year or two ago, "disfigured" the walls of the Baths of Diocletian, as nestling in the ruins; or the pagan column as assisting in a new Assumption of the Virgin on its apex; or the old wall of the city as kindly accommodating itself to the task of supporting the new telegraph wires. In other cases we may invert the fanciful interpretation, regarding the new masonry as playing the protective part of helping to sustain and keep erect the row of ancient columns which it encloses.

The scope of this feeling for Rome's ancient remains and of our indulgence in these fanciful modes of regarding them, will widen as the perception of the meaning of what is seen grows fuller and clearer. What a large new fascination comes to the shattered and blackened theatre when we recall the fact that it was named by Augustus after his nephew Marcellus, the son of the sister to whom he dedicated the portico hard by, and when we rehearse its pathetic story, turned from its first noble purpose to viler uses, and becoming the prey of fire and of man's violence. Those ringing smithies in the lower arches of the great fragment now take on a new significance: they seem somehow to be giving the last insulting blows to the once majestic edifice.

As this illustration suggests, Rome can only exercise

its full sway on imagination and feeling when the whole of its vast history begins to be visualised with some clearness of detail. The sites and the buildings will often remain dumb until a little history touches them with its magic life, when they will speak to us in eloquent tones. In this historical preparation the later periods, hardly less than the earlier ones, should find a place. The great events of the Liberation, the frustrated attempt of 1848, and even the entry of the Italian troops in 1870, seem already to have passed into the category of remote events. To feel the full compass of the enchantment of the eternal city, we should be able to reconstruct and interpret the scene at the Porta Pia, as well as scenes in the ancient streets and buildings.

Reading means an exercise of volition, and one who wishes to be fully obsessed by Rome must call on his will to some purpose. The contemplative dream in this huge mausoleum of the Ages can come only as the reward of a long and strenuous application of mind. Nor is reading the only concentration of effort required. In order to get into wide contact with Rome we must, like Evelyn, put hard work into the visiting and re-visiting of her monuments. But while working hard, we must not be so foolish as to try to exhaust all that Rome exhibits. The mood of happy contemplation requires leisure, and it feeds itself much better on a prolonged inspection of a few selected sights than on a hasty glance at a larger number. Not only so, the visitor who is not so much an archæologist or a student, as a seeker after thrilling impressions, will have to go in search of what most appeals to him. He, too, will in a sense have to be a discoverer, an unearther of ancient treasure. The objects starred in the guide-books will

not necessarily have the greatest value for his eye. The disfigured fragment of an aqueduct or of a tomb, even the spring of a broken arch, may, though lacking archæological importance, fill him with a strange delight when its setting invests it with some special fascination for the imagination. The unexpected lighting on such unpraised and scrappy relics of the past is one of the chief delights of a ramble in the city.

In order to feel the full compass of Rome's fascination one must care, in some degree, for all parts of its show. There are to-day, as there were heretofore, those who are obsessed by some one part only, such as the remains of splendour which hang about her once dominant church. A special love of titles, pomps, and ceremonies will readily beget in Rome an intense and enthusiastic preoccupation of mind with church dignitaries and functions, with possible presentations of the duly robed to Cardinal and Pope. On the other hand, he who would feel the throb which Rome's magnificence can impart will do well not to dismiss these fading splendours as worthless tinsel, as merely silly meaningless formalities ; for, tawdry as they are apt to seem, they reflect one chief glory of Rome. Nor shall we do well if we deign to notice only certain periods of Rome's art. The work of Michael Angelo seems, no doubt, to express with particular clearness the greatness and majesty of Rome ; yet the more gaudy splendours of the later architecture and its decoration speak also of its magnificence, and they should be comprehended in the survey by those who would come under the spell of its many-sided glamour.

Such comprehensiveness of view, however, does not imply that we shall all see Rome's greatness alike. The visitor cannot divest himself of his individual prefer-

ences, and, while seeking to embrace something of every side of the spectacle, he will perforce give a closer attention to those aspects of it which especially interest him. A psychologist, for example, may be expected to find a peculiar charm in the numerous statues and busts which take us back, as no buildings are able to do, to the men and women of antiquity. It is not only that they supplement other parts of the scene, showing us, for example, the Emperor who erected the splendid arch of triumph or the greatest of Rome's tombs, or some of the vestal virgins who once lived in the Palace, the ruins of which have held us spellbound ; nor is it merely that their white marble forms seem somehow to warm and humanise the spectacle of the dead ruins ; but that they are portraits into which has been put a considerable diversity of human character. As sculpture they will, to be sure, give us less than painted portraits, and we know how much they represent a traditional convention rather than an artist's personal impression. Yet, just because of this incompleteness and abstractness of aspect, they stir thought the more to trains of fanciful conjecture. We try to see in these reticent, unchanging faces some indication of the splendid genius, or, on the other hand, of the feebleness of mind or moral dissoluteness which characterised the original. A yet more potent fascination belongs to the portraits of private citizens which, presumably, give us first-hand studies of physiognomy. One who loves to dive into the mysteries of a human countenance will find ample scope for interesting imaginative conjecture in scanning the thoughtful, worn face of the physician in the Lateran, and, for a more amused vein of speculative contemplation, in examining the physiognomy of the successful, smug-looking shoe-



maker in the Palazzo dei Conservatori. Then, there are the quite unknown portraits which offer to fanciful contemplation a yet larger field. These strongly modelled heads, these highly characterised faces, exercise a curious spell on one's imagination. Even those which are dismissed by our learned German as of a "terrible ugliness," may lure us with a strange fascination. Who, we ask ourselves, were these nameless men and women, the light on whose marble faces seems to break into an incipient smile, who suggest, together with much resoluteness of will, such shrewd, half-humorous insight into their world? For some of us Rome would be another Rome if it were depopulated of its great marble company; in which, side by side with deities, satyrs, and the other mythological figures, with the emperors and the great men of renown, we find individualised men, women, and even children, unnamed yet like unto ourselves, including those wedded pairs who sit on the sepulchres with clasped hands, as if for a new and unending union.

Throughout the development of our obsession the spectacle will retain something of its first motley, jumble-like aspect; and Rome proves once more its dominating force by reconciling us to this appearance of jumble. Yet, if the contemplative mood can find space for a larger kind of reflection, the appearance of patchwork will be toned down by the gradual development of a sense of its deep-lying organic unity. The elements of contradiction seem, as in the Hegelian synthesis, to get reconciled when we carry them up into a higher unity. The bizarre juxtaposition of styles in a church begins to look a proper combination as soon as we get an inkling of the unceasing processes by which art grows and changes. The great transition

from Pagan to Christian art, ever present in the spectacle of Rome, appears not only to justify these odd contiguities, but to give them a satisfying look. We like to see the old Roman tombs and sarcophagi adapting themselves to the new Christian faith, the superposing, for example, of mosaic crosses above a group of satyrs and cupids on an ancient sarcophagus in the church of S. Maria in Aracoeli.<sup>1</sup> We may learn to accept so palpable an artistic anomaly as the figure of S. Agnese in her church on the Via Nomentana, an antique statue of oriental marble in which one leg is exposed up to the knee. A growing apprehension of the continuity of a nation's life, of how the new generations hold on to the old ones, will reconcile us to much in Rome—the turning of fine old palaces into banks, hotels, and shops, and even the dust heaps and look of wanton wreckage which the latest “improvements” are importing into the scene.

The glaring contrasts will be softened, too, by a recognition of the way in which the ideas and customs of pagan Rome were taken over in modified form by the Christian Church. This continuity of the two religions thrusts itself on the notice of a visitor to Rome in the “Pontifex Maximus,” for example, that figures in the grandiloquent papal inscriptions. After one has read the works of Lanciani and others the contrast of the pagan and Christian in Rome can never seem quite so harsh a clashing as it did before. We are beginning to see that Virgil was a herald of the Christian faith in a much higher sense than that claimed for him by Dante.<sup>2</sup>

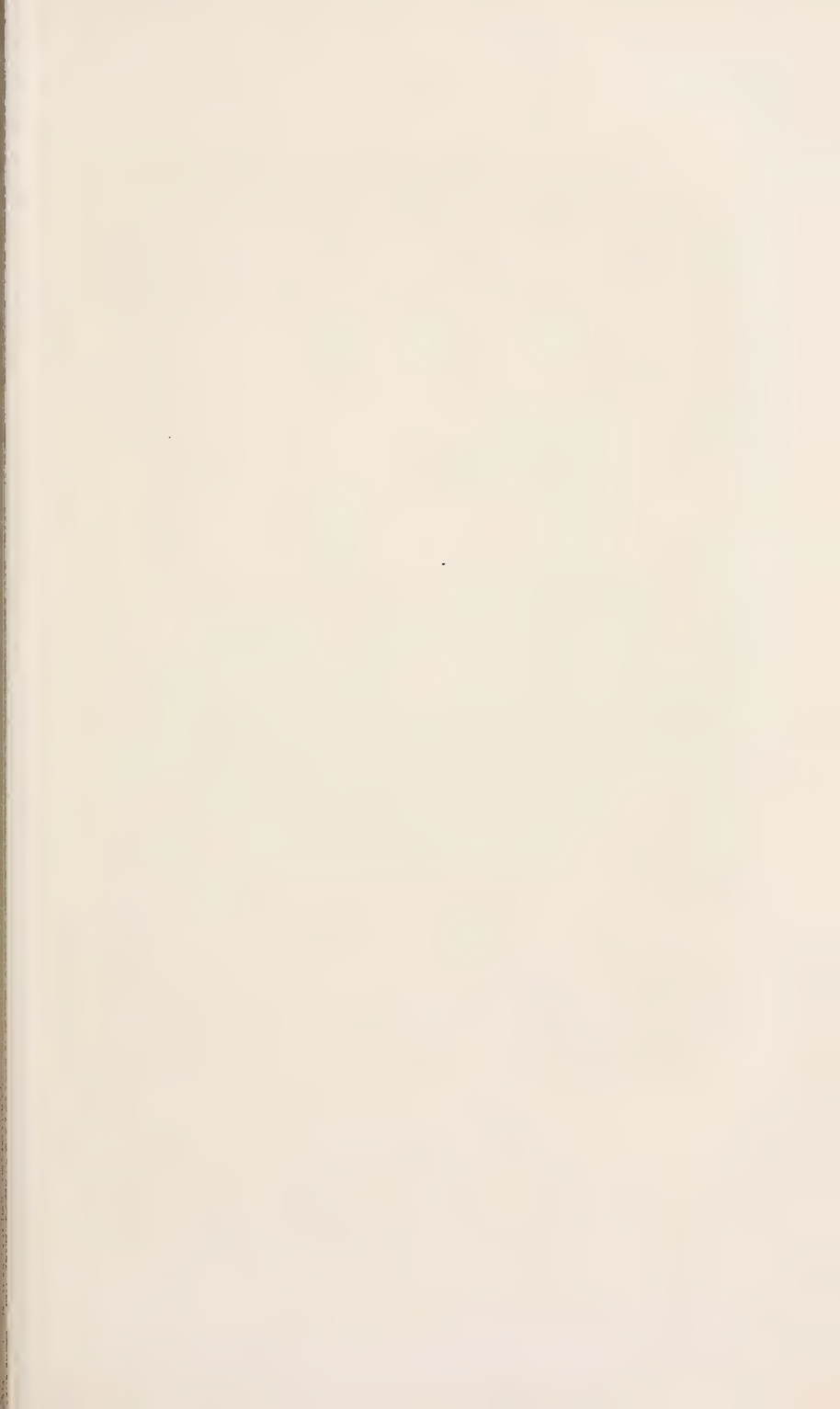
<sup>1</sup> See Vernon Lee, *Soul of Rome*, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> See W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (Gifford Lectures, 1910, 1911), Lecture XVIII.

Another sort of reflection, likely to favour a more acquiescent attitude towards Rome's incongruous collocations, is that which occupies itself with the profound identity of character underlying its great changes. The grandeur of the city is the expression of a particular spirit in its people, a spirit characterised by a passionate ambition and by a love of splendid and lavish display. This spirit appears not only in the ancient Imperialism and its magnificent structures, but in the flourishing days of the papacy and the new glories of architecture which it set up. It reappears to-day, in such astonishing erections as the vast and magnificent hospital, the Policlinico, and in the brand-new colossal monument just erected on the Capitol. Like his ancestor, the modern Roman loves the sight of huge buildings and of gorgeous ceremonies.

To seize the wild tumultuous spirit of Rome is to hold the key to the chaotic jumble of its sights. Such a spirit has no place for harmony and calmness. These are attributes of a soul; and no imaginative writer has yet succeeded in endowing Rome with a soul.

The contemplator of Rome may carry his reflection farther, and, following M. Anatole France in *La Pierre Blanche*, treat the spectacle as a great object-lesson in the advance of humanity, typifying in her history the jerky, irregular gait of the "march of progress" in the past; and as offering hints for speculative conjecture on the probable future of civilisation. Perhaps Rome becomes most completely freed from traces of confusion and disorder when it is regarded thus, and not merely as a historian like Gibbon would regard it. If we rise to this point of view our obsession will take on more of philosophic tolerance, as we see that the details which seem to be repellent and to collide one







VIA APPIA (TOR DI SELCE).

with another, belong, as much as those which attract and are harmonious, to a whole which is not only great and of a masterful spell, but has so profound an import.

A strenuous effort to come under the full spell of Rome will bring moments of weariness. Who, when deeply pondering in some church like S. Prassede, has not envied the group of "globe-trotters" which the sacristan hurries along past the many beauties of its interior to see the sacred relics? We may half love our enchantress and yet wish now and again to escape from her. We may tear ourselves away for a day's diversion in the campagna, but only to feel that Rome follows us. She follows us on the Via Appia with its long rows of shattered tombs, where, on the approach of evening, the removal of the sheep to their night-pens and the gathering of the shadows deepen the sepulchral awesomeness of the scene. She seems to grip us with the long arms of her aqueducts. And St. Peter's softly lit dome follows us with a mild yet insistent glance, right up to the Alban Hills.

In these intervals of recoil from Rome we may catch a glimpse of the ludicrous aspects of our devotion. Why, we reflect, should we spend ourselves in the long effort to realise what has so little practical bearing on our life? This appreciation of the comic side of our obsession is likely to come through watching others who are similarly bemused. Women often throw themselves with an almost furious zest into the medley of Rome's spectacle. You may see them listening to the lecturer at the Roman Forum, dipping into Hare, or some yet tougher authority, as they snatch a hasty lunch at a restaurant. Even at the tea and the dinner hour they can hardly banish from thought that which has for the time become their absorbing world. They

have a fine contempt for the Philistines, for whom "doing Rome" means such entertainments as attendance at the afternoon concert on the Pincio, or playing golf outside the Porta S. Giovanni. Their talk is not without a flavour of preciosity, and they will touch caressingly such thorny words as "cipollino" and "opus incertum." They have the facility of a High School girl in "getting up" a subject quickly. Yet they behave as genuine devotees, ardently responsive to Rome's enchantments. And though we may now and then smile at their crude excesses, we cannot fairly withhold our admiration. They are not merely illustrating a feminine alertness in adopting a fashion of the hour. If we think what sort of life many of them have led before their visit, we cannot but respect these arduous exertions in the service of so exacting a mistress. The new experience is lifting them out of the ruck of the commonplace, unfolding larger visions, and developing at once new capacities of imagination and thought, wider sympathies, and loftier sentiments.

Obsessions, even the sturdiest and most deeply rooted, have their decline and death. They are limited experiences, more or less parenthetical passages in the current of normal life. Rome's hold on her devotees begins to relax in time, sooner or later according to the fullness and depth of their response. It may even do so before our sojourn in the city is over; and if we revisit it our hearts will not pulsate with the old fervour. As Louis Stevenson has it in *An Inland Voyage*, "there is no coming back on the impetuous stream of life." We never, strictly speaking, have a great and deeply stirring experience repeated. There will be the absence of the first flush of young enthusiasm, and there will pretty certainly be changes in point of view and in

emotional responsiveness. Yet if it declines, the obsession does not leave us as we were before. The young woman who has been uplifted by the glamour of Rome will always retain some of her attachment. Her first passionate devotion, like that of the religious convert, may cool, but only to give place to a calmer sentiment.

How long, one wonders, will the obsession last in the case of future generations? In the past it has varied both in its form and in its intensity, and it is changing at this moment. At least the conditions which have favoured the more romantic kind of contemplation indulged in by visitors of the last century are changing, and rapidly. This is evident to a visitor of to-day who is able to recall the Rome of the early seventies. The authorities are busy transforming the city into an elegant and attractive capital, with ample provision of hotels and other things for the tourist world. They do not hesitate to pierce the fine old wall by a series of raw, ugly gashes, as you may see between the Porta Pia and the Porta Pinciana, or to dwarf the Capitol, and destroy the proportions of things by erecting on it a monstrous monument. It is quite possible that before long modern villas with sham ruins, which have already reached outside the wall, may cover much of the Campagna. It is but human that the lover of the older and more picturesque Rome should resent these changes. Yet the fascination of the city has outlived many changes in the past and it may outlive even these threatened ones. Prophesying is particularly dangerous in the case of Rome, and we may be warned by the example of Horace Walpole, who wrote: "In a hundred years Rome will not be worth seeing." The excavator may run a race with the rebuilder of Rome and more



than counterbalance the effects of the losses by adding new treasures to the antiquities. Still, one may venture to guess that Rome and the Campagna will continue to lose in picturesqueness of aspect, and to take on more and more of the aspect of a city of museums.

Our farewell to Rome should perhaps be made in the bright, efflorescent month of May, when the winter's visitors have flitted northwards. With something of the regretful mood clinging to us we shall now find ourselves face to face with a beautiful new life which the revolving seasons unfailingly bring. Down the Scala in the Piazza di Spagna falls a cascade of greenery and flowers. The trees in the street are hung with big clusters of purple bloom. If we walk to the Palatine we find the fragments of brick wall festooned with red and white roses, and looking down on the Atrium of the Vestal Virgins we spy little red roses about its cool-looking pool. And with the roses have come the birds, the goldfinch now adding its jubilant song to the cooing notes of the blackbird. The Alban Hills are suffused with a blue haze and seem to be taking a long *siesta*. In the fierce hours the heat is great, and the itinerant ice-vendors and lemon-squeezers become the great benefactors of mankind. The native Roman, who not so long ago shivered under the cold blast, now grows radiant, and perhaps chuckles softly at the sight of the latest invaders of Italy protecting themselves from the heat with umbrellas. The reviving season brings another mood to the bemused gazer through the vista of Rome's past. Hardly aware of the change, he steps into the more gladsome mood which accompanies the forward outlook, the prevision of good things to come. The spring flowers which speak of earth's in-

exhaustible fecundity assure him that Rome, too, and the beautiful land over which it rules, will renew themselves, entering into their full share of that beneficent radiance which the progress of our age is shedding on the world.

## IV

### FROM A ROMAN WINDOW

OUR flat, a *terzo piano*, taken for the winter 1904-5, is in the midst of new Rome. Quite near to our left is the Central Railway Station facing the long piazza down which shoot the creaking trams with a jaunty, pitching movement. Opening into this one is another piazza, adorned with a large fountain, whose waters have a ring of up-to-date Naiads reclining on sea-monsters. To our right there stretches away a fashionable quarter whose newness is written, not only on the glaring façades of the palaces and hotels, but on the fashionable equipages and on the bright uniforms of the mounted officers. Yet our window discloses nothing of the gay turmoil. We look down into the "Certosa," a large cloistered garden designed by Michael Angelo for the Carthusian monastery, which the tide of modern improvement has somehow passed by. Its white arcade is a low enclosure for so spacious a garden, made low perhaps to give it as much sky as possible. It looks very peaceful as it lies almost soundless in the morning sunshine. The boisterous tide of Rome, barely divined by the ear, yet felt to be surging about it, helps to deepen its repose.

As we look down the ear guides the eye to a fountain in the centre whence comes the only discernible sound, the faint tinkle of dropping water. Nothing could be less like the fountain of the sportive Naiads in the piazza. Its plain, shallow basin is enclosed by four cypress



MICHAEL ANGELO'S CLOISTER. MUSEO NAZIONALE, ROME.





trees. Two of these have the familiar toy-like form, but the other two are much larger, one, with its exposed trunk and its lofty plumes of foliage, looking more like a eucalyptus tree, while the other is little more than a decrepit stem. These last are the survivors of the celebrated four cypresses which are said to have been planted by Michael Angelo,<sup>1</sup> and we loiterers at the window naturally make much of them. They bring, it is true, something of decay into the trim garden, yet they bring also into the stillness a breath of life as their plumage bends to the passing breeze.

A glance at the garden tells one that it is no longer a retreat for the musings of pious monks. In the circular space about the fountain are set large vases, and marble heads of oxen and rams on low pedestals. The latter look strange in their whiteness and alertness of pose so near the dark and slumbering cypresses. The contrast between pagan and Christian Rome dominates the garden; which, having served for three hundred years and more as a cloister, has recently been incorporated into the youngest of Rome's museums of antiquities. The antithesis grows clearer as the eye wanders from the central fountain to the enclosing arcades, and glimpses the white statues touched by the morning sun.

The curious vicissitudes of its history become more sharply defined when the eye passes beyond the cloister to the rather amorphous pile of building which shows above the low line of the monastery roof in front of us, just behind the little campanile. A glance suffices to tell us that these turrets of disintegrating brickwork and these massive walls with their great arches are the

<sup>1</sup> Lanciani gives a photograph of the four cypresses in *Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome*, p. 438.

workmanship of Imperial Rome. They belong indeed to one of the largest architectural legacies of the later Empire, the Thermæ of Diocletian. The loftier and more imposing building behind is the tepidarium of the Baths, famed for its archless dome wrought out of solid concrete, and embodied by Michael Angelo in the Carthusian Church of S. Maria degli Angeli. The garden seems to take on still more of peacefulness as we see it sheltering under these massive relics of a far older world.

The garden of to-day, though often solitary, has a quiet life of its own. Before six o'clock the early waker hears the campanella of the cloister ringing out its Ave Maria betimes, announcing the hour in a quaintly emphatic fashion—three strokes, then four, then five, and finally a single one. When the wind is right there is a sort of diminuendo coda of far-off and similar series of bell notes, symbolising in its voluminousness the far-receding past of the Roman Church. Since the Government confiscated the "Certosa" only a handful of the old well-disciplined fraternity is left to respond to the sharp command of the early bell. Later on there reaches the drowsy ear a yet harsher sound, the grinding of the still sleepy tram-wheels as they resume their long day's task. The garden's day begins later, when the sun, rising above the railway station, throws a revivifying gleam across it. This gleam rewards the marble ox, whose eyes have been turned all the night, as if in keen expectancy, towards the east, like the bird and Beatrice in Dante's comparison, "*fiso guardando pur che l'alba nasca.*"<sup>1</sup> The gleam strikes a silver spark from bits of hoar-frost on the grass and bathes a few of the marble statues in the opposite arcade, so that one

<sup>1</sup> *Paradiso*, xxiii, 1-12.

can see their shadows on the wall behind. The sun is here, more than elsewhere, seen to be the life-giver; for the cold marble figures of men and beasts appear to quicken when, like Michael Angelo's Creator in the Sistine Chapel, he stretches out towards them his radiant arm. It is pleasant to follow with sympathetic eyes the warming ray as it moves slowly along the corridors, gladdening more and more of the waiting row. Yet, just as in observing human acts of beneficence, one cannot here help feeling some regret for the figures which stand outside, waiting, too, but overlooked. Soon mortals begin to appear on the scene: first of all a custode well-cloaked and walking briskly, for the morning air is keen. Dim sounds of a hammer reach the ear, and one discovers a group of men busy, in a pleasantly discursive way, setting up a low, antique column. The fountain plays on untiringly, even though the tramontana may seek to stay its course by binding it with icicles; and one is half amused at this quaint example of the survival of a once beneficent habit.

Punctually at the opening hour of ten one may see the first group of visitors enter the garden. If you cannot guess their nationality from their alacrity you will soon discover it from other clues. Look at that tall, energetic-looking man as he bends his head low over the red-covered book, while his lady companion steps quickly in advance as if searching for something. He makes sharp, emphatic beats with the right arm, eloquent of the dominie who feels himself to be close to the sources of knowledge. Yet the amused observer will not withhold his praise of the army from the north which once more invades Rome, this time on a bloodless mission—that indefatigable, far-searching race to which we owe so much of the bolder kind of Roman history and



archæology. Sometimes, at a later hour, a larger group of men in black is visible in one of the corridors, and the lady occupants of the flat may afterwards read with chagrin that they have missed the sight of a Royal visitor. Even the monastery reveals to our window something of its attenuated thread of life. Now and again in the confusion of roofs just beyond the little campanile we can spy the form of a monk, which ascends and descends, disappears and reappears, with a cat-like agility bewildering to the earth-tied. Is the roof, one wonders, the only place of exercise left to the poor Carthusian monks now that their spacious garden has been taken from them? One fears that they are no longer admitted even to the smaller cloister of the Certosa, on which a window in Sala XI of the Museum looks down, and where the young roses sport in the month of May.<sup>1</sup>

At noon the garden grows warm, and visitors to the museum, fatigued with the morning's gazing on the irresponsible faces of gods and mortals, may be seen sitting in the sun on the low parapet of the arcade. The statues in the corridor have now their blissful hour. The workmen have long since abandoned their intermittent fits of labour. Early in the afternoon the garden resumes its air of perfect repose, tenanted only by the silent, contemplative statues and busts. Before the sun declines behind the towering mass of antique masonry, the corridors visible from the window have lost their warmth. As it disappears, the luminous sky, throwing out in darkest brown the medley of brick structures, gives to this a new magnitude and more of the solemnity of immemorial things. The garden, too

<sup>1</sup> The Director of the Museum has kindly informed me that this little garden once belonged to the Carthusians.

bereft of the warm rays, though it still holds in its fountain a brilliant point of sky-reflected light, acquires a new value for the eye as a cool, restful foreground for the splendours of the sunset.

It is at this hour, when sleep seems to have taken the cloister and the ancient ruins assume a weirdly fantastic aspect, that the mood of reverie is apt to seize the sitter at the window. The fancy at such a moment may take a Heinesque bent and picture the beautiful forms in the chambers of the museum as living on their quiet dream-life after the darkness has enveloped them. Does the great Juno, who seemed to Goethe to be "like a poem by Homer," have her queenly serenity broken for an instant in the privacy of the dusk by a recollection of the pigmy sight-seers of the day? Does the Satyr, for an instant, stop pouring out his gladdening wine at the passing of the ghosts of those old monks, whose cells he and the other pagan figures have so unceremoniously appropriated? It is hard to think of the austere Vestal Virgin never availing herself of the darkness for a moment's relaxation of the severe air of high priestess; or of the compact and lined brow of Aristotle remaining ever firmly set, as though for the birth of some new generalisation on the moral life. Yet one likes to imagine that the tired Ares continues to sit in gracious inclination enjoying a relaxation of muscle and of spirit, with the laughing Cupid at his feet; that the face of the Erinyes, emptied of all trace of its fury by soothing sleep, preserves its beautiful calm; that Orestes and Electra prolong their moment of tender farewell; and that the Aphrodite carven on the archaic throne, smiling as she rises out of the sea and spreads her arms towards her handmaidens, perpetuates her thrilling moment. No matter what the archæologists

finally pronounce her to be, it is the smile of a lovely maiden whose soul goes out to meet some new mysterious joy. One hopes that not even the wandering shade of one of the old Carthusians would wish to dissolve the beatific vision of that young face.

Another kind of reverie takes us as the eye is raised to that huge mass of silhouetted brickwork. "Roman baths" we call them, and so hide from ourselves much of their significance. Baths they were, no doubt, in which the luxury of bathing was elaborated into a fine art. Yet, as the better preserved Baths of Caracalla show us, they were great centres of entertainment, adding to their nominal functions those of our clubs, theatres, race-courses, and libraries. The medical use of the baths, which was not wholly wanting, may have stood in about the same relation to luxurious enjoyment as it does to-day in some palatial British "Hydro." The Imperial gift of these *Thermae* was designed, like some act of public munificence on the part of an American millionaire, to eclipse all earlier achievements of the kind. Diocletian, who was a thrifty ruler, had been gently reminded by some privileged courtier of the wondrous shows of the circus and the amphitheatre given by some of his predecessors. He seemed at the moment to pay no heed to the point. Yet later, after the wars in the East, he for once forgot his thrift and gave the Roman people the spectacle of a triumph which it would not soon forget, the last, indeed, it was destined to behold. And his colossal baths were almost the last of the great buildings which the Emperors erected for the delectation and pacification of the Roman people.

As we sit at the window in the gloaming, phantoms of the past seem to return and to arrange themselves

in picturesque scenes. Men and women are dimly discerned strolling leisurely under the beautiful peristyle of one of the courts of the Baths, awaiting the sound of the bronze bell which announces that the hot water is ready. The society of the day looks a little worn as it gathers and talks under the unobservant, rapt eyes of the statues and busts. Yet, in spite of the humiliation of their order, one or two survivors of the nobility bear themselves with something of the old dignity. Strangely earnest words are faintly overheard, for these are perplexing days and there is a feeling abroad that the pillars of the old Roman world are shaking. Now it is a bit of the more hopeless lament of some later "*laudator temporis acti*." Now it is a portion of the subtle argument of some Neoplatonist as he does his best to demonstrate the superiority of the new religious rites of his school to those of the Christians. Groups of dames, too, appear upon the scene, sitting apart and quietly talking about the swift progress of the new faith. Others of an idler turn gossip of the latest fashion, imported like the theosophies from the East, or listen to one of the versifiers of the day who, when "the voice of poetry was silent," entertained their patrons with pretty compliments and elegant acrostics.

More imposing scenes come into our phantasmagoria, in which the stately procession of a patrician family and its retinue on its way to the theatre, or to one of the small pantheons, is thrown against the background of a crowd of citizens—now "a mixed residue of all races"—which pushes and gapes, undeterred by any respect for faded dignities. Perhaps these dusky men dimly divine that it is they who have been the conquerors of Rome, since they have compelled the rulers, from the



very extent of their territorial acquisitions, to abandon the once proud city.

Other and gloomier retrospective musings come to us at the window. The very magnitude of the ruins gives them something of an oppressive aspect; and the effect is deepened when one thinks of the multitude of slaves, prisoners of war, and others who were made to sweat through the hot Roman summer, in order to hurry on the erection of the Baths. One recalls again the apparent contradictions in Diocletian: how at first, probably in deference to his wife and daughter, he was inclined to tolerate the new faith; whereas later on, through a reluctant yielding to pressure, he became the author of the last and greatest of the persecutions; and how he and his coadjutor Maximian employed many thousands of Christian prisoners in completing the buildings. We follow him in imagination when, again illustrating his love of contrasts, he retired to his native country, Dalmatia (A.D. 305), where he found a deep contentment in cultivating his garden and growing choice vegetables. The remains of the gigantic structure which he erected at Spalato, palace and mausoleum in one,<sup>1</sup> do not suggest that this satisfaction was ever dashed by regret for that reluctant consent to turn persecutor.

As we sit and watch the huge pile of ruins growing yet more weird in the deepening twilight, our fancy, under the guidance of Lanciani<sup>2</sup> and others, retraces some of the historic changes which these Thermæ have undergone. It appears that they retained their

<sup>1</sup> A description of this building is to be found in *Roman Cities in Northern Italy and Dalmatia*, by A. L. Frothingham, pp. 308 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Especially useful is Lanciani's *Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome*, pp. 434 ff.

splendour undiminished, and were still used, for a century or more after their erection. They may probably have suffered damage when Alaric sacked Rome (A.D. 410). But they continued in use under Theodoric (A.D. 493–526), and only passed into the category of useless and forsaken things when later on in the sixth century there was no longer a supply of water from the aqueducts. We do not hear of the ruins again till the year 1091, when Urban II made a present of them to S. Bruno—whose statue stands to-day in Michael Angelo's church—for the establishment of the Carthusian brotherhood. They still made a noble and beautiful spectacle, with their white and coloured marbles, when Petrarch and his friend the Cardinal visited them about the middle of the fourteenth century, climbing to the top of the vaulted roof of the tepidarium to enjoy the sweetest air, the widest prospect, and the most perfect silence and solitude.<sup>1</sup> Early in the sixteenth century the Cardinal Jean du Bellay bought a large portion of the Baths and turned them into a garden. This came afterwards into the possession of Pius IV, who carried through the project of Urban by commissioning Michael Angelo to erect the church and monastery (1563–6).<sup>2</sup> About the same time that the Certosa was built, Gregory XIII transformed other portions of the ruins into a granary, and Sixtus V, in order to erect a villa for his sister, not only destroyed certain portions of the ruins, but stripped the rest of their marbles. The rebuilding of Rome in the last century—more especially the cutting of new streets and

<sup>1</sup> Hare, *Walks in Rome*, II, p. 28. The marbles were seen by Giovanni Rucellai about a century later.

<sup>2</sup> On the appearance of the Baths before Michael Angelo's changes, see above, p. 14.

the erection of the Railway Station and the Grand Hôtel—has carried destruction to a further stage; and for what remains we have to thank the builder of those tenacious masses of conglomerate and brick, against which the blow of the pickaxe is aimed in vain.<sup>1</sup> Yet the picturesque Museo opposite our window illustrates a new desire to preserve instead of destroying. The same thing is indicated by the recent action of the Italian Government in clearing the ruins of the wine and other storehouses, studios, etc.

As imagination, following the eye, moves through the historical perspective—typified by the spatial perspective before us, from the modern figure of the custode in the foreground to the ruins of the late Empire in the distance—our mood grows more reflective. We meditate for a moment on the ironical ways of the whirligig of time, by which the pagan deities, whose departure poets have lamented, after having been deprived of their territory by the Church, have come back in their marble transformations, and not only dispossessed the usurpers of their rights, but drawn after them a new cosmopolitan gathering of worshippers.

But spring—a late spring this year—is coming and with it change is entering our sheltered garden, calling us back from broodings on the past. The little birds begin to flutter from one cypress tree to another and to send us from their hiding-places snatches of song. The number of visitors is increasing, for the band of foreign winterers in Rome is being reinforced by the spring arrivals. Yet the glad spring brings its regrets. The tramontana which had so long swept the garden had sorely tried one of the old cypresses, with its bare, riven trunk, and towards the end of February, in the early

<sup>1</sup> Gunpowder was used by Sixtus V.

morning hour beloved of death, it fell to a strong blast. The Roman journal which chronicles its fall tells us that it had been struck many years before by lightning, and that its black trunk was quite hollow, devoured by damp and worms. A tornado in the summer of 1886 had already destroyed one half of the famous group, and the fall of this tree has left only one standing. Unsparing critics have attacked the tradition which ascribes the planting of them to Michael Angelo, seeking to prove that it belongs to a much later date than that of the foundation of the monastery, namely, when the garden fountain took the place of the well of the Carthusian monks. Yet sentiment may be forgiven for still clinging to the story, and we could not but be sympathetically touched by the spectacle of the sad group of men and women which gathered that morning, as at a burial, about the prostrate giant. The fourth cypress is said, in spite of its brave-looking plumes, to be doomed.<sup>1</sup> One hopes that Tasso's oak may long be spared to feed the visitor's mood of sentimental reverie.

How prettily do these legends gather like enfolding ivy about old trees. That of the cypresses seems to have a peculiar appropriateness. It was so natural an error to suppose that the great artist who planned the handsome church and the beautiful cloister should have added these noble trees. And if a creator had to be found, who was so fitting for the post as he who shaped many large and stately forms and painted for us the great Creator in the last and highest of his acts? As we look down upon the doomed survivor of the historic group we ask ourselves whether the younger trees at its side will gather about them so fair a legend of creation.

<sup>1</sup> The upper plumed portion of this tree has since been blown down (March, 1909).



## V

### THE UPPER ANIO

RIVERS, like human lives, may hold surprises for those who, reversing nature's order, retrace their course from end to beginning. The Anio, as first seen near Rome, say from the Ponte Nomentano, or from the Ponte Salario just before it joins the Tiber, is hardly likely to impress the visitor as a noble and far-famed river. It possesses no amplitude ; and the water shows a dirty hue as it moves sluggishly between its slimy banks. It has, indeed, for a patient eye, a certain picturesqueness even here ; so that a lover of Rome may choose the Ponte Nomentano as a resort for spring evenings, when the dull, drabbish green tones of the current are brightened by soft blue reflections, and the warm lights and deep shadows of the grassy banks, and of the willows which venture out like half-timid bathers into the stream, add a richness to the picture. Yet at its best it fails to look fully alive and strong, as we like a river to be. As it meanders languidly from one little promontory to another, it suggests a wounded serpent creeping to its death-hole ; and the fanciful idea may easily occur to a spectator that its reluctant advance arises from a dim presentiment that it will presently be taken captive by the stronger current of the Tiber and borne away under the Ponte Molle to Rome and the sea. There is nothing in these lower reaches to hint at a strong, fleet current, singing as it goes, up there in the

Sabine Mountains, at the foot of Monte Gennaro, whose pyramidal form gleams out on us in the evening light.

Once in the Sabine hills we are face to face with another Anio, a river alive and in swift motion. It is indeed at Tivoli, where the Anio ends its fresh mountain journey and is about to lapse into the dull existence of the Campagna, that it reaches the highest pitch of its vivacity: breaking out for a moment into wild freaks of movement, and, as if to show its contempt for the timid, circuitous descent of ancient aqueduct and modern railway, hurling itself straight down to the plain of the Campagna. No doubt it may be said that the falls which we admire to-day are not the spontaneous act of the river, but largely the work of the engineer who bored his tunnels here some eighty years ago. But to this it may be replied that the Anio took this giddy leap in Horace's day, long before the engineer came upon the scene. The engineering feat, moreover, was rendered necessary by the Anio's own reckless conduct in damming itself up by deposits of the limestone travertine, and so threatening to engulf the ancient city of Tibur.

He who would know the spirit of the Anio in its changing moods will do well to linger at Tivoli. The joyous, leaping waters deserve to be seen, not only in the midday hours, when the deep-cradled pools below break here and there into sparkling laughter, and when the rising spray transmutes itself into a lovely prismatic veil; but also in the cool hours of early morning, when the dew adds its drops to the lush freshness; and at the hour of approaching sunset, when, strolling out on the Way of the Falls beyond S. Antonio, one can look back from the glow which floods the Campagna and beats up against the rocky promontory of the town, and cool

the eye on the long, shady ravine, its sides fretted with streaks of a wan whiteness, suggestive of a veil of lace-work hanging from Night's robe.

The fascination of the falls was felt in the Augustan age, when Tibur was visited during the dog-days by the emperor himself, and by Mæcenas and other patricians, who, we may be sure, sought something more than its mountain air. Of the fair temples and villas which were then raised in and near Tivoli, there are still considerable remains.<sup>1</sup> The leisurely visitor will find at Tivoli, as in Rome and at Terracina, ancient columns walled up in later buildings. How much of architectural ornament the Roman patricians added to the neighbourhood we may conjecture, not only from these remains, but from the fine examples of sculpture which have been found here, and are now in the Vatican and elsewhere. Nor did the renown of beautiful Tibur pass with the majesty of ancient Rome. In the *cinquecento*, too, another patron of letters was wont to spend the fevered summer months in a Tivoli villa, which still stands, close to the site of the villa of Mæcenas. As we wander to-day through the beautiful deserted garden, its terraces unweeded, its grottoes and fountains stricken with decay, and look down between the immemorial cypresses on the Campagna softly shining in pearly gradations of tint, we may find a melancholy pleasure in trying to reconstruct those *fêtes champêtres* of Ippolito d'Este, the Renaissance Cardinal; in which, amid the glowing colours of fresco and of flowers, and to music played by water on bronze flutes, high birth paid its tribute to the Muses, and poets and scholars held

For an account of the remains near Tivoli, see a paper by Dr. Thomas Ashby, "The Classical Topography of the Roman Campagna" (II), in *Papers of the British School at Rome*, Vol. III.

their academic courts; while mirthful sports added lighter entertainment. The imagined scene completes itself with the delicate pale face of Tasso, wearing one of its rare smiles.<sup>1</sup>

The visitor who, after inspecting the ancient temples and the Renaissance villa, wishes to ruminate on the vanished scenes, may stroll along the quiet road which passes the railway station and follows up the valley of the Anio. Here he will find the river flowing smoothly between green poplars at the foot of the mediæval town, and giving no hint of the daring leap it is about to take. Its pleasant murmur, to which the rustling of the poplars adds a blithe accompaniment, sounds like a happy babbling about the proud days of long ago when men held it in honour and brought splendour and gaiety to its banks.

Apart from its one reckless act, the Anio has been a useful servant to man. The same habit of depositing travertine which threatened the security of Tivoli has supplied the Roman architect with what Lanciani calls "the king of building materials"; and at various points in the course of the upper river, where travertine is deposited, it is quarried for building purposes, a certain spongy variety being said to be specially valued in the erection of lighter structures. A still more precious gift of the Anio Valley has been the cool water flowing from its limestone beds, which formed the main supply of ancient Rome. It was conveyed thither by four aqueducts, a few ruins of which add a touch of architectural picturesqueness to the valley. A walk of about a mile outside Tivoli, along the road to Ciciliano on the left bank of the Anio, brings us to a

<sup>1</sup> See the vivid description of these reunions in Dr. W. Boulting's recent volume, *Tasso and his Times*, chap. vi.



bridge called the Ponte degli Arci, spanning a brook which here flows into the river. Near this, one can see remains of all the four aqueducts: a portion of the lofty structure of the Anio Novus, a small arch of the Marcia, the channel of the Anio Vetus, and (higher up the road) a long line of arches belonging to the Claudia.

The valley of the Anio can be explored by taking, as far as Vicovaro, either the road or the railway, both of which keep pretty close to the river and to the ancient Via Valeria. The Sabine Mountains present from this point of view a pretty, wavy contour. In May the soft silvery grey of their limestone slopes is varied with greens and browns. Below in the valley are orchards, to the late bright bloom of which there respond the huge white irises that light up the hedges. The river itself is of a bluish green tint and sparkles in the sunshine. It flows blithely between its green banks, edged with alders and willows, above which we can spy familiar northern growths, the hawthorn, the honeysuckle, and the wild rose, and higher still, among limestone boulders, a wealth of green bracken. One can easily imagine oneself in some limestone valley of Derbyshire, save when a heavy wave of acacia perfume passes, or a nightingale embroiders the monotonous hum of the stream with tiny figures of its liquid melody.

The valley, which grows narrower and more picturesque, is but thinly populated. Higher up, however, on the steep slopes to our right, we pass Castel Madama, the first of a series of fortified towns which, stained dark with the weathering of centuries, scowl down on the passer-by with something of their old threatening aspect. On our side of the river we notice stretches of white masonry—part of the restored Aqua Marcia—which emerge here and there, and are carried on

arches across the gullies that run down to the Anio. At Vicovaro, the ancient Varia, we cross the Anio by a bridge, the farther end of which shows masses of conglomerate, belonging to the Roman bridge. Climbing to the town, we pass, outside the mediæval gate, a fine fragment of the ancient wall built of rectangular blocks. Another reminder of the days when Varia was still an *oppidum* and had not sunk to be a mere *vicus*, confronts us in the classical columns of the church of S. Antonio within the gate. When Pius II visited the town (about 1460) he found several statues not wholly disfigured by time.<sup>1</sup> To-day Vicovaro is as shabby and squalid as many another once famous Italian town; though the meanness of its aspect is redeemed, not only by a fine situation, but by one architectural treasure, the little octagonal chapel or oratory of S. Giacomo, whose sides are faced with marble. In the principal façade is a portal, flanked on either side with two tiers of finely carved niches, each of which holds a human figure.<sup>2</sup> The style leans towards the Gothic, and the whole composition is a joy for the lover of the dainty intricacies of ecclesiastical sculpture.

Vicovaro is the starting-point for the valley of the Licenza, a stream which flows from the north into the Anio at a point a little above the town. In the time of Augustus the valley was called Utica, and the river Digentia. The beauty of the valley, and still more its endearing associations as the site of Horace's farm, make the excursion a notable one. It can easily be made on foot, though on a hot day the rough vehicle obtainable

<sup>1</sup> *Commentarii Pii II* (Frankfort edition, 1614), p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> One figure seems to have been removed. The carvings on the portion of the façade above the door are of a later period, and less interesting.

at Vicovaro is not to be summarily rejected. Having selected the latter alternative, we drive out of the town by one of its old gates and soon perceive the Licenza below us to the right, its reduced current threading its way over a wide pebbly bed. Beyond it looms, high up, the hill town, Saracinesco, whose name is no doubt connected with the tradition of the presence of the marauding Saracens in the peaceful valley of the Anio. Did some of them, we wonder, manage to settle in this high-set fastness? To-day the stern mediæval town has betaken itself to the gentle task of aiding art. It is Saracinesco and another town, Anticoli, higher up the Anio valley, which supply the artists of Rome with their fine models.

Our road, a rude and stony track, winds up over arid slopes, where a few olives manage to thrive between copses of the robust oak. We dismount, little loth, at Roccagiovine, a village superbly placed on a steep rock, its side honeycombed into hollows in which flourish dark masses of box. The village itself is squalid enough. We perform our one duty to the place by trying to decipher the half-effaced Latin inscription in the poor little Piazza Vacuna, which tells us that Vespasian restored the temple of Vacuna, the Sabine goddess of Victory, substituting the Latin name Victoria. This tradition, if well-founded, fixes one of the haunts of Horace, who ends a letter to a friend by saying that he had written it behind the ruin of the Sabine temple.

We proceed on foot to visit other spots supposed to be still more intimately associated with the poet. We clamber up a steep and stony path, bordered with soft blue anemones, to a poor but pretentious chapel, the "Cappella delle Case" (or "della Casa"), which local tradition has erroneously identified as the site of Horace's

country-house. Beyond this point the path is more richly decorated with wild flowers—anemones, some white, others of a soft cornflower-blue, and stately crimson and purple cyclamens, with petals thrown back, suggesting the hair of flying nymphs. Eventually we reach a spring, known as the “*Fonte dei Ratini*,” otherwise “*degli Oratini*”—names that clearly testify to a popular association of the spot with the Roman poet. For once the authorities support the local tradition, identifying this spring with the “*Fons Bandusiæ*” of Horace, whose waters were “brighter than glass.” Three little rills, one guided by an iron pipe, gush out from under a bank, over which a wild fig tree has twined itself into a bower. The water falls into two small pools and offers still the coolest of lavings for hands and face. Beyond these it spreads itself out into a shallow stream, and rushes down the steep mountain side to join the river.

From the *Fonte* we descend between masses of cherry-blossom towards *Licenza*, the old town which stands on a slope at the head of the valley. On our left, above the path we have followed, rise two peaked mountains covered with wood. They are spurs of the mass of which *Monte Gennaro* is the summit, and whose eastern boundary is the valley of *Licenza*. The *Lucretilis* of which Horace writes probably included the whole mass, though he may have had specially in mind one or both of the wooded spurs visible from the valley.

The history of the search for the spot where Horace rusticated in the dog-days is a curious one. It began at the end of the sixteenth century; and it would seem as if almost all the villages in the Sabine Mountains had put in a claim for the honour. Even now, when the site has been clearly tracked to the head of the valley, the



precise spot has not been certainly determined. Two sites assert their claims, one higher up above the river, the other lower down on a terrace facing the head of the valley. Some, including M. Gaston Boissier, prefer the former as according better with what Horace says of his villa. The claim of the latter is supported by the discovery on the terrace of a bit of tessellated pavement, a black design on a white ground, consisting of series of flattened isosceles triangles lying one upon the other, and making a key-pattern. The Abbé Capmartin de Chaupy, who wrote of the discovery of the pavement and other remains in the eighteenth century, considers this to be conclusive.<sup>1</sup> Sentiment could have little to say as to a choice between the two sites. On the higher one the poet would have had less of a climb to his fountain, and a more extensive view; yet the terrace, which lies some height above the river facing the hills at the head of the valley, would have been more deeply "folded in Sabine recesses"—as Clough has it—yielding to its occupant a more perfect sense of seclusion from the racket of the city.

Standing near the spot and watching a nightingale on the branch of a leafless tree as, undismayed by noonday heat, it poured out its little torrent of joy, its tiny vibrating throat all exposed to our gaze, we felt that the place was made for the retreat of a poet. Horace was not, it is true, a nightingale among poets, like Keats, pouring out his rapturous delight at the beauties of nature. His temperate and reasonable spirit had no place for violent emotion. As M. Boissier reminds us, he had not the deep love of the country which animated his contemporary, Virgil. He was by temperament and habit a townsman, liking the life, the society, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Découverte de la maison de campagne d'Horace, 1767-9.*

pleasures of the capital. In one of his poems he ridicules the affected 'gush' of certain Romans over the charms of the rural, or as we might now say, the simple life. As we look round on the enclosing hills, we realise that he must have felt himself here to be a sort of exile, a townsman rusticated through some premature failure of vigour. We understand better the early wavering between country and town, the home-longings which seized him now and again as he thought of his friends in Rome, and something like a forced note in his recommendations of the country life to his friend and his steward, as if he were trying to repress a sigh and to convince the writer as much as the reader of his letter. The continuous movement of the years had wrought a change in his early light-hearted epicureanism, touching it with something of the gravity of the Stoic's mood.

Yet, though resignation to the lot of a semi-recluse may have cost Horace something, he was well repaid. What seemed at first—he was only about thirty years old when Mæcenas gave him his farm—an impoverishment of life disclosed itself later as an enrichment. Negative pleasures, which were at least one-half positive ones, came with the exchange of the turmoil of Rome for the quiet of his valley, where unwholesome food no longer impaired bodily health, and the envious eye no longer troubled the mind's serenity. The pure exhilarating air, the salutary diet, the invigorating water of his spring, must have raised the "hedonic" value of life; while the student's new consciousness of a restoration to himself must have counted as a considerable source of happiness. One may add, too, that he learned to take pleasure in those smiling aspects of nature's beauty which disclosed themselves to him in his summer *villeggiatura*, as well as in the tranquil spectacle of

rustic toil. His valley home became still more to him when he was troubled by a precocious sense of growing old; and he prayed that it, rather than his earlier and more brilliant resorts, Baiæ and Tarentum, might shelter his old age.

In suggesting a Derbyshire dale, our valley has recalled the gentle angler on the Dove, the more so as the waters of the Anio in these reaches above Tivoli are fretted with many a promising ripple; and, looking into the stream, we have wondered whether among its other services to man it supplies him with the toothsome trout. The fish is to be found to-day among the more costly dishes of the hotel; and it is natural to conjecture that even in the Augustan days it helped to decorate the table of the patrician's villa. At any rate we know that trout were caught here in the Middle Ages, when doubtless they were regarded as a delicacy by the "religious" who then peopled the valley. A pretty reference to the Anio trout is made in the *Commentaries* of Æneas Silvius, afterwards Pope Pius II. In his journey along the Anio from Tivoli to Subiaco, he stopped at a place which he calls San Clemente, just outside Vicovaro and close to the Anio, where stood a hermitage. After praying in the chapel he partook, with the cardinals who accompanied him, of dinner near a wondrous spring, and was greatly pleased with his repast by reason as much of the suavity of the wine as of the coldness of the water. In telling of his visit Æneas cannot restrain his ironical bent, and speaks of the hermits as holy men "in the opinion of the vulgar." The people came out from the adjacent villages to see the Pope; and, in order to give him pleasure, some of them went into the river and fished against the current. The learned Pope does not tell us what tackle they

used ; perhaps a hand-net sufficed for the fish of those less sophisticated days. The Pope looked on ; and the fishermen at every new catch shouted and saluted His Holiness, handing over the fish to his servants.

Higher up the Anio, about a mile from Vicovaro, we come on one of its beautiful wooded gorges. The visitor reaches it best by going to San Cosimato, an old monastery which stands high above the river on a steep cliff. It looks to-day even more the victim of neglect and decay than the other Italian monasteries which have not had the good fortune to be transformed into national monuments. Passing through the large waste which was once a garden, we are conducted by one of the seven surviving monks to the edge of the cliff, from which we look down on the Anio deep-cradled in the valley-cleft. It looks here as though it were trying its hand at leaping before it ventured on its great performance at Tivoli, flowing over a sort of weir in a fall of some fifty feet. The steep side opposite the cliff is clothed with wood to the river's bank, a beloved nesting-place of the nightingale. We descend the cliff by steep steps and explore the natural chambers which have been hollowed out in the spongy travertine. Tradition has woven about these grottoes weird stories of St. Benedict, the great saint whose fame still fills the Anio valley. Our guide points out to us the saint's refectory, his sleeping-cell, and his chapel. It is easy to believe, with Colasanti, that these secretive grottoes in the cliff were peopled by hermits who in the dark days lived by alms or rapine.<sup>1</sup> This gorge contains

<sup>1</sup> One strongly suspects that the "San Clemente" of the *Commentaries* must be San Cosimato. The place described by the Pope corresponds pretty closely to the hermitage above the cliff. The confusion of names may have been due to the fact that there was a San Clemente near Subiaco, to which the Pope went from Vicovaro.



ruins of all the four aqueducts spoken of above. The Anio Vetus drew its water from the pool above the fall.

Moving still up the valley we pass, above San Cosimato, the junction of the Licenza and the Anio, and then come to Mandela, which has been facing us on its hill for some time. The traveller to Subiaco by railway here alights and enters a little train with three carriages of the familiar Swiss build. As we waited here one evening in May, when the hot day suddenly ended and a nipping wind blew from the mountains, we understood the appositeness of Horace's well-known description of the place, "*rugosus frigore pagus.*"

Beyond Roviano, on the right bank of the Anio, we come to a region where other ancient aqueducts found their supply. Since the current of the river was apt to be turbid and unfit for drinking, the conduits drew water from it only when there was a pool, as in the case of the Anio Vetus, whose waters, moreover, appear to have been used mainly for washing and for gardens. The two aqueducts whose sources lay between Roviano and Agosta drew their water from springs near the river. The most famous of these was the Aqua Marcia, the source of which lies below Arsoli. This aqueduct was built (146 B.C.) to take the place of the Anio Vetus, the water of which was bad. The new water was highly prized. Pliny tells us that it was the coldest and most wholesome of all the Roman waters; and Statius describes it as "*Marsasque nives et frigora Marcia ducens.*" Its source was regarded with a feeling akin to religious awe, so that Nero's daring act of bathing in the cool spring excited indignation and horror; and the gods (it is said) punished the impious act by visiting the offender with a rheumatic fever. The excellence of the water is attested by the fact that, as we have seen, the

aqueduct has been restored (in 1869), so that it is still able to send a good supply to Rome. Propertius, when praising the rivers and other waters of Italy, speaks of it as "*æternum Marcius humor opus*"; and, in view of its renovation, his words read like a happy forecast, even though the old channel is only used in places above Tivoli. The new aqueduct was inaugurated by Pio Nono on September 19, 1870, the day before the Italian army entered Rome. The water thus came naturally to bear the name *Pia*; and some scoffer, parodying a Latin inscription familiar on Italian tombstones, applied to it the phrase, "*Acqua Pia, oggi tua, domani mia.*" Not far above the source of the Marcia lies that of another famous conduit, the *Aqua Claudia* (constructed A.D. 52), the lofty arches of which are the most imposing of those long, tentacular projections by which Rome reaches out across the Campagna.

One memorable place remains, the architectural pearl of the valley; and, as Subiaco suddenly springs into view, piling itself up into a pyramid about a hill to our left, we are thrilled with the thought that there lies before us one of the glories of mediæval Italy. There stand the two ancient Benedictine monasteries, while below these are the ruins of a famous pagan construction, the *Villa of Nero*. Our road continues to run up the valley on the right bank of the river. Some distance beyond the town it curves towards the stream, crossing it at the *Ponte Mauro*, a lofty bridge spanning a rocky gully down which the Anio rushes. Just before reaching the bridge we turn to the left, taking a wheel-track which runs by the river to *Jenne*. The valley of the Anio again contracts at this point to a narrow gorge; and, as in the case of *San Cosimato*, while the right bank is arid and rocky, the opposite one is covered

with little hornbeams down to the river's edge. A few steps along the wheel-track bring us to a mule-path which strikes up on our left to the monasteries. But before climbing this, we may pause to examine some masses of ancient masonry which lie under a cliff just beyond. Close to the rock there stretches a considerable extent of ruin, stone (*opus reticulatum*) and brickwork, standing on two levels. Walls, with portions of vaulted roof and of circular apse, show that in the early days of the Empire extensive constructions stood here. In front of these remains we note a rectangular platform built of conglomerate, running out on a rocky promontory over the river. Along the sides of the platform stand quadrangular blocks of limestone. On the opposite bank, at a higher level, more ruins disclose themselves, traces of decaying walls and vaulted roofs on a green terrace, half-hidden in overhanging foliage. A short walk along the Jenne road brings us to a third group of ruins above the road, consisting also of mixed stone and brickwork. These ruins are all that is visible to-day of the villa with which Nero adorned this romantic dale. It stood on the shores of three beautiful lakes, the "Simbruina Stagna," of which Pliny and Tacitus tell us. Different views have been held as to the origin of the lakes. Some, as Lanciani, think they were natural formations, due to projecting rocks which served to dam back the current. Following up the Jenne road a little way farther one comes to a point where the gorge is pinched in by a bold, rocky promontory; and this projection may not improbably have supplied a sort of natural division between an upper and a lower lake. Yet the silence of Latin writers respecting the lakes before Nero built his villa is unfavourable to Lanciani's view, and the excavations made in 1883-4, since that view was formed, have

made it clear that the artificial promontory below the mule-track is a portion of a stone barrier which dammed back the water of the lake, raising it to a height of more than two hundred feet above the river-bed, and which served as a bridge, the *ponte marmoreo* of later times, by which the gorge was most conveniently crossed. The site of the third lake is wholly uncertain. It is possible that it lay some distance below the Ponte Mauro.

The excavations referred to brought to light sufficient remains of the villa to attest the splendour of the buildings. Several chambers were unearthed, the walls of which were ornamented with fine marbles, mirrors with "intarsia" work (inlaid marble) between vertical festoons, elegant cornices, and encaustics. The pavement showed traces of rich marble mosaics. Best of all, there was discovered a treasure of Greek art, the statue of the kneeling youth now placed in the Museo Nazionale in Rome. The authorities who carried out the excavations are of opinion that the remains discovered belong, not to the principal portion of the villa, but to accessory buildings; the more extensive ruins near the mule-track being probably fragments of baths, while the other two groups may represent a hunting pavilion and a nymphaeum. The central building itself may have stood on the shores of the third lake lower down the stream.

The stranger who visits the gorge on a spring day, may amuse himself by speculating how Nero came to choose so sequestered a spot. Was it love of the chase or the wish to escape for awhile from the growing perils of Rome? The idea of profaning one of the sweet privacies of nature with coarse revelries would have been in no wise repellent to him. We may be sure, too, that to dam back the Anio was an idea



which would strongly appeal to this "hungerer for marvels," who loved nothing better than to set his engineers on feats of the kind. History says little of this particular exploit, perhaps because of its author's more startling projects, successful and unsuccessful; because, too, in this same valley of the Anio, there occurred other things which, to the superstitious Roman, seemed more worthy of record. Of the two dread portents with which the offended gods warned the Emperor, the rheumatic fever has already been spoken of. The other was a still clearer and more impressive visitation from Heaven. When he was feasting in his Sabine villa, a flash of lightning struck the table, scattering the viands. Thus does the concise pen of Tacitus narrate what happened. Philostratus the Elder, in his *Life of Apollonius*, amplifies the story. While Apollonius was in Rome he witnessed a prodigy, namely, the unheard-of occurrence of thunder during an eclipse of the sun. With an admirable exhibition of self-restraint in prophecy, he said, "A great event shall or shall not happen." All understood his words three days later, when they heard that, while Nero was at supper, a thunderbolt fell on the table and broke the cup in his hand as he was raising it to his lips. The fertility of the superstitious mind called upon to explain portents was surely never more strikingly illustrated than in the notion that the significance of this prodigy lay in the circumstance that it occurred near Tibur (Tivoli), to which place the family of his dreaded rival Plautus belonged. Our Anio has made the acquaintance of various specimens of the Roman *Sommerfrischler*, and it may well have wondered what sort of place Rome could be to send into its sequestered vale two mortals so dissimilar as the meditative poet leading his simple life, and the madcap

potentate filling its quiet gorge with the noise of revelry.

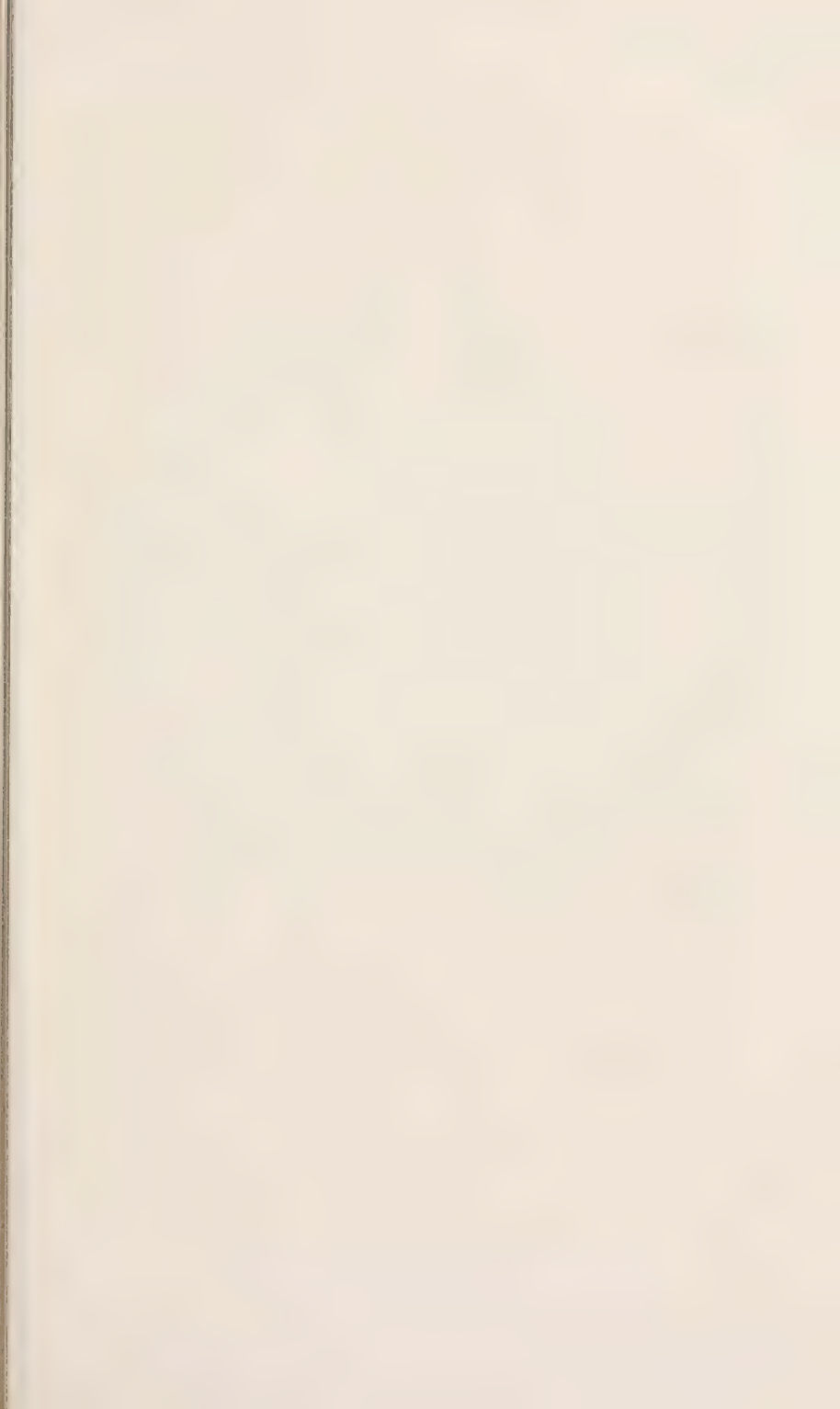
To the subsequent history of these lakes belongs the construction of one of the later aqueducts, the Anio Novus. In its early form it had been completed about the year A.D. 52, just two years before Nero became Emperor. Its original source was on the left bank of the Anio, some miles below Subiaco. In the second century Trajan, who is called by Lanciani the greatest hydraulic engineer of ancient times, lengthened the conduit, drawing its water from the lower of the two lakes, and so made it the longest of the Sabine water-courses. Like the Old Anio, this water followed a mole-like course, running for the most part underground. It was about the same age as the Claudia; and it is a pretty incident in the story of watercourses that the big brother should have been called in to carry the little one, who had travelled farther than he, on his shoulders for the last six miles of the journey to Rome. Both conduits have long ceased to bring the cool mountain water to its citizens, save indeed where the Felice takes advantage of them from the Porta Furba into the city.<sup>1</sup>

How long the splendid villa stood in this vale, its peristyle and other marble structures glittering in the eyeless solitude as a monument of human caprice, we cannot say. By the beginning of the sixth century, when St. Benedict came to Subiaco, it was in ruins. The stout dam, with its marble bridge, stood longer, barring back the two lakes, now reduced to one. These disappeared too at the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the Anio rose and inundated the land. The story

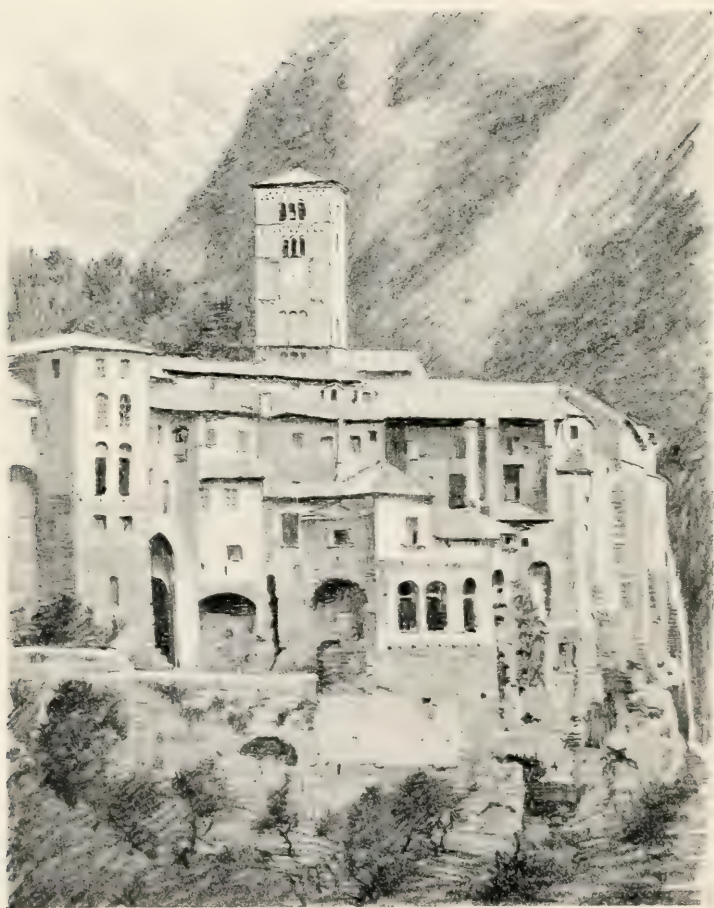
<sup>1</sup> I am greatly indebted to Dr. T. Ashby, of the British School at Rome, for information respecting the aqueducts of the Anio valley.

of this act of self-liberation reads like that of the final outburst of a human passion long restrained; and the impression deepens the significance of the roar which reaches our ear from the gully under the Ponte Mauro. Yet the Anio flows blithely enough to-day down its green ravine, and seems to reck little of the doings of our Imperial megalomaniac. The ruins are too scanty to count as a detail in the landscape. There remains only a name to remind us of the lakes and the palace—the name of the little town below the gorge which, altered though it be from Sublaqueum into Subiaco, tells us that it was once the town below the lakes.

A climb of a few minutes by the mule-path takes us from the memory of Nero's orgies to that of the first efforts in Western Christendom to lead the retired life of the saint. The most fascinating thing in Subiaco, if not in the whole of the Anio valley, is the pair of monasteries which St. Benedict planted in the seclusion of this gorge—the Scolastica, dedicated to his beloved sister, which stands above the ruins of the baths; and the Sagro Speco, or "sacred grotto," standing a short half-hour farther on, which marks the site of the cave where the saint first took shelter. They both look down on the snug cradle-valley in which the Anio on summer days sings its own soft lullaby. They are all that remain to-day of the twelve religious houses which St Benedict, pronounced by his biographer "*Benedictus gratia et nomine*," set up in this valley in the beginning of the sixth century. The story of his coming here, when only a boy of fourteen, flying from the corruptions of Rome and seeking a safe retreat where he could devote himself to prayer and fasting, is a deeply moving one; compared with which that of the early struggles of St. Francis reads







MONASTERY OF S. SCOLASTICA, SUBIACO.

like a tale of progress along a smooth path.<sup>1</sup> A sombre cloud-shadow seems to fall on the sunny dale as, on approaching the monasteries, we recall the dark and perilous cave into which the saint's food had to be let down; the spiritual conflicts from disturbers whom no cave could exclude—foul demons in alluring guise who sought to seduce him from the life of chastity; and the later pollution of the hermitage by courtesans who were introduced to corrupt his young followers—a desecration which drove him from his sequestered vale to a very different spot, the summit of Monte Cassino, fully exposed to men's gaze, which the traveller passes on his way from Rome to Naples. The contrast between the two intruders into the gorge, the feasting emperor and the fasting saint, must have seemed poignant enough to St. Benedict and his disciples. Below them lay extensive masses of the ruined villa; and, just as in Rome, in the Middle Ages, the ruins of baths and other massive structures of antiquity exciting dread by their deserted aspect and their forbidding forms, became for the popular imagination the abode of unclean spirits, so the demons who tempted St. Benedict and his followers were located in the ruins of the villa.

Of the original buildings of the monasteries nothing remains. The edifices which stand to-day are reconstructions dating from the middle of the eleventh century onwards. Our first visit to the Santa Scolastica had an agreeable introduction. It was a little before noon on a bright spring Sunday. Entering by an open corridor leading to the church, we found the place empty and silent. Then the tones of a distant organ reached our ear; and soon afterwards a cheery-

<sup>1</sup> For a recent account of his life, see *Gregory the Great*, by F. H. Dudden, II, 162 ff.

looking Benedictine entered the building and informed us that some one would presently show us over the place. As he spoke, three or four *contadini* came out of the church and, approaching him, knelt in turn and kissed his hand effusively. He dismissed his adorers with a smile and a gesture of gentle impatience, very much as a shy schoolboy tries to laugh away some tender scene in which a stranger's eye has surprised him.

The monastery is a spacious system of cloisters, the parts of which were added as the needs of the fraternity grew. The differences in date are manifest, one cloister, the "Cosmatesque," having a Romanesque, another a Gothic arcade. Again, the first and most beautiful of these courts, adorned with dainty arcades in which pairs of plain columns alternate with twisted ones, shows two stages of construction ; one side having a more finished workmanship, and dating from the early years of the thirteenth century ; while the other sides are less carefully wrought in white marble, said to have come from Nero's Villa at least a century later. The sturdy square campanile is much older than the courts. Though the church has been modernised, it retains a fine Gothic portal. Other things still preserved in the monastery are a piece of Gothic relief sculpture, a curious abbot's seat consisting of a marble slab raised high on steps, with traces of Cosmatesque ornament, and two ancient cipollino columns ; together with the once famous library. There is enough of antiquity here, when aided by the deep quiet of the place, to induce in the visitor the mood of historic reverie, to enable him to capture something of the spirit of the men who founded and embellished the monastery, and to awaken a sense of the solemnity of great things passing away.

It is a steep path from the Scolastica to the Sagro

Speco. It seems to have tried the temper of Pius II, when he came here after visiting Tivoli and Vicovaro, for he describes it as so steep that "nobody can approach it without horror." One forgets the hot toil, however, looking down on the cool current of the Anio, the bluish green tint of which flashes here and there into white. We enter by a gate with a pointed arch opening into an ilex grove, whose deep shade offers a delicious relief from the glare of the rocky path. The closely packed trees add to a retirement already sufficiently profound. According to the popular legend, their stems were wont to bend low as the saint passed by. A few minutes' walk through the grove brings us to two doorways, the first having a plain round arch, the second a pointed arch surmounted by a Greek cross with coloured mosaic work. This building, too, as a slight inspection of the exterior shows, dates from the thirteenth century, the period of transition in which the Romanesque was giving way, though only in the half-hearted Italian way, to the new Gothic influence. Its doors are a special feature of the sacred grotto. One leading into the old chapel bears the soothing inscription: "*Sit pax intranti, sit gratia digna precanti.*"

The Speco, as its name suggests, was originally designed, not as a monastery, but as a sanctuary. It is built against an overhanging cliff, and is skilfully wrought into its cavernous hollows. Its plan was that of two churches, one above another, like those of St. Francis at Assisi. To this were added later a number of chapels or oratories, corridors, and stairways, together with some accommodation for resident monks. The result is an intricate structure, which preserves much of the character of a real cave architecturally elaborated. In its perfect retirement it recalls St. Francis' Hermitage



(*carcere*), in a fold of the hill above Assisi ; and its position, under an overhanging cliff, reminds one of the grotto of Santa Rosalia on Monte Pellegrino, near Palermo. Yet it has an intricacy of form and an atmosphere all its own. The builders, unable to indulge in the architectural beauties of spacious courts and elaborately sculptured arcades, bethought them of colour, and have covered the walls and vaulted roofs of chapel, corridor, and staircase with frescoes, both pictures and ornamental designs. The whole, when seen in the low light of the afternoon, makes an atmosphere of warm yet subdued glow ; which effect is scarcely disturbed in the morning by the sparse shafts of golden light that brighten the colour here and there.

In these half-lit recesses we seem to be immersed in the very spirit of mediæval piety. The subjects of the paintings contribute to the impression. Scenes from the life of St. Benedict meet the eye in the upper and lower churches. The beautiful legend gains rather than loses by a direct visual presentment in the simple, modest art of these painters ; in which he is represented as having food let down into his inaccessible cave by his good monk, San Romano, or as watching the soul of his dearly beloved sister Scolastica soaring to heaven. In the grotto of St. Benedict, below the lower church, the figure of the saint is carved by a pupil of Bernini. Yet it is possible that this will hold the stranger's eye less closely than the portrait of the founder of another monastic order, St. Francis of Assisi. The painting represents the saint as a young man, his long refined face just fringed with a nascent beard, and without the familiar stigmata and halo. He wears a black tunic, bound round by a cord, the head being covered with a peaked cowl. In the left hand is a scroll

bearing the words "Pax huic domui." The eyes have an expression of wistfulness at once keen and tender. The fresco is pretty certainly a genuine portrait, and commemorates a visit which St. Francis paid to the monastery in the year 1216.<sup>1</sup>

The art of these walls and roofs belongs to different periods and is of unequal value. Some of the best paintings, dating from the thirteenth century, are in the Chapel of St. Gregory (the biographer of St. Benedict) and in the lower church. An inscription tells us that the latter were painted by one Conxolus or Consolo, a Roman. Nothing more is known of the artist whose brush lent so winsome a simplicity and so sweet a serenity to the story of the saint. Other paintings of the fourteenth century are the work of Sienese artists, including the Crucifixion and most of the other frescoes in the upper church, as well as those of the Cappella della Madonna to which the Scala Santa conducts. The two paintings in the stairway itself depict the implacable hostility of death. In one of these, the "Triumph of Death," we see emerging from the ruins of the stucco a human skeleton of cruel mien, riding furiously, sword in hand, on a white charger and striking down what, to judge from the two or three heads still visible, are the most quiet and inoffensive of men. The sense of incongruity in the painting is deepened when we find below the Scala the inscription, "Ossa monachorum in pace sepulta sunt," and learn that the bodies of the monks used to be carried down these steps to their peaceful resting-place. We wonder at first whether some abbot of a harsher discipline may have suggested the gruesome warning to the artist. It seems more probable,

<sup>1</sup> For a good photographic reproduction see *I Monasteri di Subiaco*, Vol. I, tav. v (facing p. 440).

however, that the latter was merely following the fashion of his hour ; for as Colasanti points out, these frescoes were painted about the time when artists of another school were depicting similar apocryphal visions in the Campo Santo at Pisa. Other paintings of the grotto, belonging to the Umbrian school, date from the early part of the fifteenth century. These, too, deal with incidents in the life of St. Benedict as narrated in the popular legends. Yet they do not give us the fresh and vivid impression of the scenes which the cunning hand of Consolo presents.

The confined and dimly lit spaces, the crowding on the eye of all these painted figures—saints, bishops, popes, and attendant people—have at last an oppressive effect ; and it is no small relief when the kindly monk who accompanies us proposes a visit to the garden. We reach it by some steps which are a continuation of the Scala Santa. It is a small enclosure on a terrace, filled with tiny roses, and, on entering it, set high above the valley of the Anio under the serene blue, we have a sense of returning from sepulchral vaults to laughing life. The garden, too, records in its own pretty way the famous visit of St. Francis to the monastery. Our guide adds a new charm to the story as he tells us in his musical Italian how St. Francis, on visiting the grotto and finding the garden full of the thorns with which St. Benedict had been wont to flagellate his poor body, was moved to temper the rigour of the Benedictine rule by bringing into their world some of nature's beauty, and so transformed the ugly thorns into these dainty roses. Thus does the gentle figure of St. Francis haunt the place, touching its spirit with a larger human love.

A visitor to the monasteries to-day will hardly fail to recall Fogazzaro's profound study of a modern saint.

Recalled at this hour, it seems to breathe the very spirit of the retired valley, with its limestone crags and grottoes, its river murmuring softly—though now and then it will grow fierce and turbulent—and its strangely-consorted monuments. We reflect again on the new “Benedetto” who, like his spiritual ancestor, seeks in these solitudes a refuge from the vanities and sins of the world. Once more we admire the fine art with which the author makes his saint repeat some of the experiences of his predecessor; as when—seeking a spot where he can sit with Don Clemente his protector and teacher under the silently watchful stars, and open up the secrets of his soul-struggle—he selects those unhallowed blocks of masonry by the river below the Scolastica.

The visitor who has the time may perfect his impression of the musing monasteries by a stroll up the valley toward Jenne. From the road, which skirts magnificent rocks, he will look up to the buildings firmly planted on the cliffs. A bird’s-eye view from above can be gained from the wooded mountain, bearing a cross, whose green slopes rise on the other side of the Anio facing the Scolastica. One of its names is Carpinetto, so-called from the “carpino,” the little hornbeam which covers its riverward declivity. From the summit one can look down into the courts of the Scolastica, and on a Sunday morning may watch the tiny figures of the peasants as they move along the path between the two monasteries on their way to Mass. From this point, too, one gets a good idea of the general plan of the Speco with its long Gothic arcade, its terraced gardens, and the cliffs and woods which enclose it.

So closely are the monasteries and the town of Subiaco conjoined in their history that some inspection of the latter fittingly completes a visit to this retired corner of



the Anio ; and, in spite of its general shabbiness and abundant dirt, and of the labour exacted in climbing its steep streets and steps, the inspection will be richly rewarded. It is characteristically mediæval in its narrow streets, which wind about and double in a perplexing way ; in its long, dark archways, which, like the streets, are seldom straight and are sometimes round at one end and pointed at the other ; in its steep *scale* (stair-ways), among which you will find one with its foot arched over and flanked by a tiny raised shrine ; and in its few old gateways. On a Sunday afternoon the shady streets are alive with knots of men and boys standing about, and women and children squatting on the doorsteps. In their festive attire they serve to light up the dark, time-stained walls. They look like a sturdy, nonchalant race ; and the women eye the passer-by with an expression of frank inquisitiveness dashed by a touch of hostile suspicion. They are the descendants of a people habitually on the watch in days when the brightest of Sundays brought no guarantee of security, and when the din of battle and its bloodshed too were brought into its piazzas and up to its very doors.

The story of Subiaco is in its essentials that of many another town in the papal territories, modified by the proximity of the monasteries. Of its beginning and its early fortunes we know next to nothing. Nibby thinks that the ancient castello was built between 528 and 596, that is to say, soon after St. Benedict had set up his religious houses ; and that both were afterwards deserted and then rebuilt early in the eighth century. Two hundred years later, the monasteries were growing wealthy ; and in the eleventh century the abbot seems to have become the Baron of Subiaco. The feudal



SCALA IN SUBIACO.



dominion of the abbey over the town was consummated by the erection of the Rocca about the year 1070. It seems to have remained in the hands of the monks for some four hundred years. The most flourishing period of the abbey extended from the date of the building of the Rocca to about the end of the thirteenth century—the epoch to which the reconstruction and embellishment of the monasteries belongs. After this a period of decline set in, and continued uninterrupted, save for a short revival of prestige in the fourteenth century.

This decline was due in part to external causes, to disasters such as plague, earthquake, and flood—that inundation of the valley which made an end of Nero's lakes—and to the disorders consequent on the absence of the popes from Rome. But it was aided by internal troubles caused by the abbots and their monks. In Subiaco, as in Rome, the union of spiritual with temporal power was prolific of misgovernment, of intrigue, and of strife. The so-called followers of the pious recluse, who led an abstemious life in his cave, were men of war who lusted for material dominion. Their abbot, who lived in the Rocca, still looking down on Subiaco like a falcon on its prey, levied hard exactions on the town, and rode at the head of its army in many a bloody conflict with neighbouring bishops. These enterprises brought new possessions and greater renown for a time, but were destined ultimately to impoverish and exhaust both town and monastery. Nor were these aggressive wars the only undermining agency. The new temporal functions of the abbot could hardly consist with a due supervision of the monks; and we read of moral laxities which, in spite of one or two efforts to restore discipline, grew from bad to worse, until the Pope had to deprive them of the right of electing their abbot. In later times



the abbey fell into the hands of the powerful Colonna and Borghese families. The feuds which now arose brought bloodshed within the gates of Subiaco and right up to the Piazza della Valle, close to the entrance to the Rocca. Twice, we read, was the town sacked, and on one of these occasions burnt as well, when Pompeo and Scipio Colonna, "*Abati commendatori*," waged war on the Pope. In the eighteenth century the people of Subiaco, no longer able to endure the feudal tyrannies, conspired against the monks; so the Pope abolished the temporal jurisdiction of the abbots. And thus the monasteries were stripped of even the appearance of their old dominion.

In the evening, looking down from our bedroom window and listening to the Anio as with purring sound it curls about the feet of the old burgh, we lapse again into the musing mood. The murmur of the river shapes itself to our surcharged imagination as an echo of the chequered story of this secluded valley, its Imperial villa, its monasteries, and its town. The low whispering tones in which it tells its tale deepen the feeling of the remoteness of its events, and of the disappearance of its older world. Riotous emperor, emaciated saint, bellicose abbot—all belong to orders of things which have passed for ever. Fogazzaro's artistic revival of the mediæval saint serves only to remind us how completely he has passed away.

But the murmuring stream tells us more than this. Its happy note sounds like an invitation to linger, like the soft plea of a friendly host as his guest announces his departure: "*Stay just one day more.*" It tells not only of that which vanishes, but of that which abides. The cultivation of the soul in retirement still remains open to us, and will remain, even though particular

forms of it, like those practised by Horace and by St. Benedict, may have passed away. Its voice sets us wondering whether there is not room in human life to-day for occasional withdrawals from a world which is even more with us than it was in Wordsworth's time ; for opportunities of communion with nature and with self, less subject to interruption than those provided by a cruise from port to port, a sojourn at some fashionable watering-place, or even a month in a crowded Swiss hotel.

## VI

### VITERBO

VITERBO is only fifty-four miles from Rome, and is connected with it by a special railway, yet one suspects that its name is almost unknown to a large number of the Englishmen who travel in Italy. One obvious reason for this neglect is that, since the railway began to bear visitors to the South, Viterbo, instead of lying on the high road to Rome, has been left isolated betwixt the new routes. Yet it is a well-preserved mediæval town, with walls, churches, and palaces which will repay a visit. If it is wanting in a distinguished school of painting, it has developed an architecture of its own, which is curious and of considerable value for the history of the art. Its chief attraction, however, lies in its historical associations—in the part it played in the Middle Ages both as a place of refuge for the Popes, and as a plucky combatant in the struggle between Pope and Emperor. It makes, too, a special appeal to the Englishman, since the one English pope figures in its story, and since an English prince was murdered on the steps of the altar of one of its churches. A further inducement to visit the city is the recent improvement of the hotel accommodation,<sup>1</sup> the increase in the number of travellers in motor-cars having stimulated the landlord of the principal inn to raise his house to a quite satisfactory standard of comfort.

<sup>1</sup> I write of the year 1905.

Through its learned librarian, Signor Cesare Pinzi, Viterbo has recently made a bid for the interest of visitors by publishing a full history of itself during the most strenuous and eventful period of its existence; and this has been followed up with an excellent little guide. From Signor Pinzi's narrative, we learn that for more than three centuries Viterbo played a part in Italian history which, if it failed to reach the point of brilliance, was certainly respectable. This achievement, though doubtless due to sterling qualities in the citizens, was favoured by outward circumstances. Its position, close to the ancient Via Cassia, the high road to the north, on the north-west slope of the Ciminian Forest, at a convenient distance from Rome, together with its salubrious qualities, due to its elevation (over 1000 feet), and its sulphur baths, marked it as a likely resort for Pope, if not for Emperor; while its situation at the edge of the Pope's dominions exposed it to intrigue and to attack. We may briefly touch on some of the more interesting points in this story of an Italian city.

In the year 1115, Viterbo was formally made over to the Holy See as a part of the Patrimony of St. Peter.<sup>1</sup> Yet not until three more centuries had passed was it prepared to accept the peaceful rôle of a dutiful daughter of the Church. As the recent building of fortified walls suggests, it was beginning to taste the joy of battle, and to feel its fighting powers. In the first half of the twelfth century, infected by the spirit of its time, it found ample vents for its fighting impulses. During this century the conflict between its burghers and its nobles waxed fierce and obstinate; and a series of attacks on neighbouring

<sup>1</sup> It had been added to the Papal territories by Hadrian I. as early as 787. (T. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, Vol. VIII, p. 72 note.)



cities was initiated by the conquest of the ancient and strongly placed city of Ferento (1172). It was also drawn into warfare with other cities through its subjection to the Papal dominions. Thus, when Eugenius III sought a refuge in the city, he levied an army in Viterbo and other papal territory, in order to attack the Republicans in Rome who were headed by Arnold of Brescia (1145): an incident which gave rise to a long feud between the two cities.

In the struggle between Guelph and Ghibelline, the republican sentiments of the citizens and their attachment to the Pope combined to dispose them to side with the former party. At the same time, since the people cared more for their civic independence and expansion than for any other cause, they were not unwilling, now and again, to listen to the flattering voice of an emperor, who would promise to deliver them from papal exactions and to confer a greater degree of autonomy and prosperity on their city.

The rise of a Ghibelline faction within the town is said to date from the visit of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1155. It was then that the people saw an emperor stoop to hold the stirrup of a pope, the one English pontiff, Hadrian IV (Nicholas Breakspeare), as a condition of subsequently receiving the crown from his hands. The Emperor seems to have ingratiated himself with the citizens by conferring on their town the title of city, making it his vassal, and bestowing on it the imperial standard. It was in Viterbo, too, that he set up a few years later his anti-pope Clement III.

The end of the twelfth century found the city rapidly growing. It had begun to enlarge its borders, taking in another of those hill plateaux on which a great part of it stands, and it was extending its territory by conquest

also. In 1193 the title of "city" was confirmed by Pope Celestine III, who also raised the church of San Lorenzo to the rank of an episcopal cathedral. The importance of Viterbo was recognised also by Celestine's great successor, Innocent III, who in 1207 selected it as the meeting-place of the famous Council, which for the first time laid down the basis of the political constitution of the Papal States.

This advance in power and dignity naturally drew to Viterbo further attention from the emperors. The real tussle between Emperor and Pope for the possession of the city began with the appearance in Italy of that gifted and dazzling personality, Frederick II (crowned in Rome 1220), who raised the German dominion in Viterbo, as in a great part of Italy, to its highest point of completeness.

Viterbo was at this time in a mood to listen to the overtures of the foreigner. She had excited the anger of the Papal Court by sheltering the heretical Paterines. She had, further, roused the jealousies of Rome by forcible acquisitions of new territory. The nobles, who after the Peace of Constance (1183) had been required to live with the burghers within the city, had become a worse source of disorder, and they proved a potent germ of Ghibelline disaffection. Thus it came to pass that the citizens gave a warm welcome to Frederick, when he offered his good services as mediator between it and Rome, with which a fierce war was now being waged. His pleadings with Gregory IX, with whom he was now on friendly terms, were successful, and Viterbo obtained peace, though on pretty severe conditions (1234).

By the end of the decade Frederick had been excommunicated, and the Emperor and the Pope were bitter and implacable foes. About the year 1240,

the Viterbese were angled for by a reminder from the Emperor of how, when they were hard pressed, he had "donned helmet and cuirass in their behalf." The people of Viterbo responded by giving him a great reception. While Frederick's wiles were thus undermining the city's loyalty to the Papal Government, Gregory died. The news of this intrigue must have been a bitter pill to the old man, who at this time was prevented, by the Emperor's successful march southwards, from taking his baths at Viterbo.

The Emperor now began to look on the city as a permanent possession, marking the fact of his dominion by erecting, in 1242, a huge palace or castle, which is said to have had sixteen towers and horrible dungeons. But he was soon to learn the amazing fickleness of his rather easy prey. In 1243 the citizens rose against the Germans, so that the governor had to retire to the castle and provision it. When the Emperor, hearing of this, attacked the city, he was driven back. Thereupon, the Pope sending help to the Viterbese, Frederick beat up recruits from neighbouring cities. The battle resulted in the complete defeat of the Emperor—one of the first of that series of reverses which led to the collapse of his power in Italy, and finally to his despondency and death (1250).

The conflict left bitter feelings on both sides. Frederick, in his second manifesto to the Princes of Christendom (1245), vents his anger on the city; and he is reported to have exclaimed on one occasion: "If I already had one foot in Paradise, I would gladly draw it back on the chance of avenging myself on the citizens."<sup>1</sup> The Viterbese, on their side, seem to have

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Ed. Winckelmann, "Kaiser Friedrichs II Kampf um Viterbo," in *Historische Aufsätze, dem Andenken an Georg Waitz gewidmet*, 1886.

cherished a hatred like that of a woman who has temporarily forsaken her lord for a stranger and become thoroughly disillusioned. The same cardinal who led the defence destroyed Frederick's palace, and, in order that it might not be rebuilt, carried the city wall, which had not before been completed on this side, through the ruins. The picturesque figure of Viterbo's young saint, Santa Rosa, whose memory the citizens still honour by an annual procession, appeared on the scene to denounce the remnant of the Imperial party in the city, and to foretell the death of her arch-enemy.

Taught by bitter experience, the city wisely resolved to relinquish external politics, and to set its house in order. This concentration of activity on internal affairs was aided by the circumstance that about this time the popes, driven out of Rome by chaotic disorders, began to visit Viterbo, and to take up their residence there. From about the year 1260, a series of Popes, beginning with Alexander IV, who died there (1261), stayed in the city; some coming on their election to be crowned, others to die and be buried; while others made the place a more permanent residence. In 1266 a beautiful palace was specially built for the visitors at the expense of the commune. Among these was the eager politician, Clement IV, who was the first to occupy the new palace, and who made it notorious by inviting to it Charles of Anjou, afterwards King of Sicily, and other ambitious and intriguing personages of the time.

The establishment of the Papal Court in the city must have brought it more than one benefit. The presence of the Pope made for peace and prevented a repetition of the old backslidings from the Church. Among positive benefits, it secured a more satisfactory government, for the Pope was in general a better person to



deal with than one of his fussy officials, and would, on occasion, wisely temper the harsh treatment of heretics due to excess of zeal. Moreover, it gave the city, not only new and more imposing spectacular elements, but more of real consequence. The great and exciting business of electing a new Pope drew to it many exalted personages with their retinues, and introduced the stir of great affairs. The Viterbese eagerly joined in the exciting business, and, as faithful guardians of the Church's honour, carefully watched the growth of new intrigues, seeking to restrain the violence to which these were apt to give rise. It is even claimed that they were the first to put the College on such occasions under lock and key, a practice clearly indicated in the word "conclave." The presence and support of the Holy See supplied a considerable impetus to the efforts which were now being made to improve and decorate the city by the erection, not only of the Papal Palace, but of large churches and municipal palaces.

Yet, if the Popes served to save the city from external conflicts, they introduced a crop of internal ones. An atmosphere of political intrigue hung over the city. The advocates of the various claimants for the Chair were active and aggressive, and quarrelsome factions met in the squares, or in the narrow winding streets, filling the city with uproar and violence. In this way the old feuds, arising from the rivalries of noble clans, were intensified and extended. The bold and public-spirited action of the burghers, in forcing the cardinals to shorten the interregnum between Pope and Pope, must have further embittered the relations between them and the nobles, so that in the end this opposition to the cardinals cost them dear. During the delay of nearly six months, which preceded the election of the French-

man, Martin IV, in 1281, when the College of Cardinals was crowded with the Orsini and their dependents, the people, losing patience, broke into the assembly and seized three cardinals as hostages ; as a consequence of which sacrilegious act, the Bishop of Viterbo had to fly, and the city was punished by the dread penalty of excommunication. The new Pontiff, Martin, who was little more than a vassal of Charles of Anjou, wiped the dust of the truculent place from his feet, and eighty-six years were to elapse before Viterbo was to receive another pontifical visit. These events, we are told, reduced the city to a state of squalid poverty and gloomy dejection.

With the fourteenth century the names of new families leapt into prominence. Among these the most famous were the clans of the Gatti and the Di Vico. The first to capture the Signoria was Silvester Gatti (1325), " a proud and perverse Ghibelline." He was but a sorry leader, and was soon driven out of the city by its disgusted citizens. After him came the clan of Di Vico, who took the title of Prefetti (Prefects) of Rome, the first and ablest of them being the celebrated Prefetto, Giovanni di Vico (1338). The despots of Viterbo seem to have been merely rude fighters, so that, although they brought some aggrandisement to the city, they contributed nothing of the splendour and fame which were conferred on other Italian cities by the patrons of the new learning and art. Yet, bad as their prefect was, the citizens refused to expel him when in 1347 they were ordered by Cola di Rienzi to do so, and to send ambassadors to the national Parlamento in Rome. Even after Innocent VI, in his determination to free the Papal States from tyrants, had suppressed Di Vico (1353), the city gave itself once more to the tyranny of this masterful family.

A deeply interesting event in the history of Viterbo, which occurred in the interval between these tyrannies, was the visit of Pope Urban V to the city on his return from Avignon (1367). In connection with this visit we read, strangely enough, not of wild rejoicings on the part of the populace, but only of a serious riot which was brought on by the Papal Marshal's daring to wash his dog in one of the highly-prized fountains of the city.

The prolonged sojourn of the popes in Avignon, leading to further extortions on the part of their officers, seems to have cooled what little affection Viterbo still retained for them. In 1375 the son of the preceding tyrant, Francesco di Vico, entered the city to the cry of "Long live the people;" and the people, responding by salutations to the "Lord of Viterbo," having stormed the castle (Rocca) and razed it to the ground, proceeded to the Piazza del Comune, where they burnt the articles of their Papal constitution. Twelve years of the new lordship had to be endured before the citizens were strong enough to defeat and slay the worst of their tyrants.

At length the Papal Chair was restored to Rome, and the Viterbese were able to see their Popes again within their walls. They did, indeed, with what looks like a fatal tenacity of passion, open their gate to another Di Vico, Sciarra (1391); but after only a few years of power, the usurper was driven out. The city became henceforth strictly subject to the dominion of the Pope, and was, for the first time, required to pay tribute. The astute Boniface, however, mitigated penalties by judicious favours, and by a clever stroke included, among his bulls and pardons, a sheaf of indulgences for those of his rebel subjects who

would assist gratuitously in rebuilding and strengthening the fortress. The constitution of the city was now altered, the more popular element, the Parlamento, being suppressed.

It is at this point that the local historian breaks off. Henceforth, he writes, Viterbo was to remain "almost atrophied for more than four centuries in the mystic sleep of the Papal States, until the Breach of Porta Pia came to reunite it with the affairs of the nation." The "mystic sleep" began under Martin V, when the citizens were subjected to plentiful admonitions from friars, Viterbese and others, who preached peace and concord, anti-Semitism, and purification of manners. It was now (1426) that San Bernardino of Siena visited the city, and kindled in the citizens a passion for moral reforms.

Early in the same century Viterbo again became a resort of the Popes, Boniface visiting it for its baths, and Innocent VII, Gregory XII, and John XXIII—the next John after him who had died here—fleeing hither for security. Later in the century there came the most cultured of them, Pius II (*Æneas Silvius*),<sup>1</sup> who loved to be here in the month of May, not only to take the baths, but to stroll in the fields and enjoy the air, and look on the green crops and the flowering flax, "which in its colour imitated the heavens." On one of his visits, on Corpus Domini day, his cardinals decorated the city's whole length, from the Franciscan church to the cathedral, with blue and white draperies, and prepared scenes in which were represented events from sacred history, such as the Resurrection and the

<sup>1</sup> *Æneas* was at Viterbo, taking baths and finding intellectual refreshment in writing, when he heard of the death of his predecessor on the Papal throne. See W. Boulting, *Æneas Silvius*, pp. 237 ff.



Assumption of the Virgin, the housetops being used to represent heaven.<sup>1</sup>

The "mystic sleep" was scarcely interrupted by an interesting visit in the next century (c. 1541). The distinguished lady Vittoria Colonna, whose husband had recently been slain in war, chose the place for three years of retirement and religious meditation. She was drawn to it by the promised companionship of her friend, Cardinal Pole, who lived here for some years as Papal Legate, and Governor of the Patrimony of St. Peter. He proved to be a judicious friend, at once encouraging her to take part in the theological discussions held at his house, and gently restraining her tendency towards a severe religious asceticism.<sup>2</sup>

After this we hear of Viterbo now and again from a traveller in Italy. Montaigne, who travelled in 1580-1, speaks of it as "une belle ville" with "beaucoup de belles maisons, belles rues, et plesantes." Almost a century later another Frenchman, the savant, De Blainville, gives us the first detailed account of its buildings.

To a stranger who drives into Viterbo from the railway station, it at once shows itself to be a mediæval town. He will catch a glimpse of the old wall, and, outside this, of the fine Torre di San Biele, with its two battlemented stories and its curious combination of round and pointed arch, which was erected in 1270. Inside the gate the first impression may disappoint one who has read of the battles and the pageants described in its history. He may feel, as J. A. Symonds felt on visiting Syracuse,

<sup>1</sup> M. Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, III, pp. 287 ff.; and *Hist. Essays and Reviews*, pp. 93, 94 and 97.

<sup>2</sup> See M. F. Jerrold, *Vittoria Colonna*, chap. x.

that the reality had a disappointing smallness. The streets are narrow, the squares mostly small, and there are no such imposing buildings as the cathedral and the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena. Yet he soon discovers that it is, so to say, drawn to scale ; and after he has grown accustomed to the standard he will find much that is architecturally interesting. A large part of these relics of a past art date from the period of Viterbo's most strenuous life—the interesting time in the history of Italian architecture when the Lombard Romanesque style was about to pass into the richer style known as the Lombard Gothic.

It is natural to turn first to the famous historical spot, the Piazza San Lorenzo, where stand the cathedral and the Papal Palace (now the Episcopal Palace). As a whole, the square has an unfinished look, and its buildings impress one as small and as bleakly isolated one from the other. In addition to the cathedral and the Popes' palace, there is but one other building—a charming “ mediæval house,” said to date from the thirteenth century.

The piazza stands on one of the highest parts of the city, and the cathedral, it is said, occupies the site of the ancient *Castrum Viterbii*. This building, with its later classical façade, and its fine campanile, marked with black and white horizontal bars in the Sienese manner, is impressive even from without. It is said to represent a larger Romanesque church of the twelfth century reduced. The most interesting feature of the interior is the curiously carved capitals, some in leaf-pattern, others in the form of winged quadrupeds, or of human faces. Here a lover of ceremonial spectacle will naturally recall the Papal coronations and sepultures which took place in the church. The imagination of a

student of history may select an important political event, such as the meeting of the Great Council in 1207, or one of those incidents which touch the deeper human emotions. Among these the most solemn and most pathetic was surely the excommunication passed here in 1268 by Clement IV on the Hohenstaufen lad, Conradin. This darling of the Ghibellines had ignored repeated summonses to appear before the Pope ; and a like indifference showed itself just after his excommunication, when he and Prince Frederick of Austria rode defiantly at the head of their troops past the city, and the Pope, with prophetic shrewdness, remarked to his cardinals : " Behold the victims led to the sacrifice." The handsome modern tomb of John XXI, set up in the cathedral opposite the modest old one, carries the thoughts back to sinister events : the swift succession of three Popes in a single year (1276), and the sudden death of the last of them, John XXI, by the collapse of a room which he had just built in the palace (1277).

The Papal Palace looks from the front a puny and shabby building. This impression is partly due to its state of decay, partly to its position. It stands on the edge of a precipitous side of the narrow valley of Faulle, and when looked at from behind it is a distinctly impressive structure, set high, like the church which it represents, on a rocky foundation, strengthened by a stone wall, stout buttresses, and a massive arch. Entering the building from the piazza one steps into the famous Hall of the First Conclave, which conducts to the old papal apartments. It is a dingy, badly lit place, though by peering upwards one can manage to see something of its fine wooden roof. In the old days when the cardinals gathered here, it must have worn a very different look : well lit with six windows on either side, similar in form



PORTAL AND LOGGIA OF PAPAL PALACE, VITERBO.  
(BEFORE RESTORATION.)





to those of the palazzino opposite. These have long since been covered over, though from the back one can still see the frames of those on the hinder wall. The gem of this structure is, however, the open loggia added to the palace in 1267, where the Pope could show himself and give his benediction. It runs to the right of the palace over the deep arch. Up to 1903 it had been sadly neglected, and its graceful arches had been filled in; but in that year the restorer took it in hand. Above the arcade is a kind of frieze in which an alternating lion and a shield represent the city of Viterbo and the Gatti family, while higher still may be seen traces of the symbols of Pope and Emperor.

Among many scenes which are apt to recur to one in this palace is that enacted in the hall in 1270. Clement IV was dead, and already more than a year had passed, and no successor had been elected. So the commune with characteristic energy began to apply the screw, first keeping the cardinals confined on a diet of bread and water, and then, after this measure had failed to bring them to a decision, removing the roof of the Aula, so that the heat of the dog-days and the rain might force them to discharge their duty. In the archives of the city there is still preserved a bull, issued by the College during this time of its extremity, in which it prayed the Captain of the city to remove from the roofless hall an aged cardinal who was too infirm to endure the severe discipline. It is pleasanter, however, to dwell on the moments of happy tranquillity which the palace gave to a pope like Pius II, when on a spring morning he looked down from its window or from the loggia on the golden poplars in the valley, fluttering in the soft breeze above the shooting fruit trees and the gleaming rivulet.

From this retired piazza the visitor may pass to the

larger and more impressive one in the centre of the city in which the civic life is centred, the Piazza del Plebiscito. The finest of its buildings is the Palazzo Municipale, the construction of which, with the piazza, was begun in the year 1264. Only the fine arcade of the original palace survives. In this building are the library, the archives of the city, and an interesting museum which contains, among other curiosities, some noteworthy Etruscan sarcophagi and urns, as well as paintings by Lorenzo di Viterbo and other local painters. The other striking feature of the piazza is the Communal Tower (Torre del Comune). This tower, which fell and was rebuilt in 1487, is 44 metres in height, and lifts its slender form, crowned by the lightest of iron belfries, with an aerial grace which will charm even one who is familiar with the famous Torre del Mangia at Siena. A curious detail in the piazza is a pair of large stone lions on granite columns. The one on the south end represents the Guelph emblem of the commune before the destruction of Ferento (1172); the other at the north end, which has a palm tree (the symbol of Ferento) added to the lion, is the emblem of the city after this event.

On this piazza more than one exciting parlamento has been held, more than one fierce battle fought. The fiercest fight was in 1387 when the people rose against their tyrant, Francesco di Vico. It was the feast of the archangel St. Michael, and from the belfry of the church of Sant' Angelo, at one corner of the piazza, fluttered a flag with the image of the saint. Just when the citizens were losing ground, this banner fell in their midst; and the favourable omen so rallied their spirits that they fought with redoubled energy and drove the tyrant from the place. This church of Sant' Angelo adds another interesting detail to the piazza, a Roman

sarcophagus, whose sculptured surface depicts the hunt of Meleager. A popular legend has interred in this beautiful tomb one of the worthiest of Viterbese women, Galiana. This lady who, so the story runs, lived about the middle of the twelfth century, was of a rare beauty, and was known as "la Bella Galiana." A Roman baron, urged by a mad passion for her, attacked Viterbo in order to carry her off by force. Failing to enter the city, he prayed that the fair lady might at least be shown to him for a moment on the wall. He was granted his request, and, at sight of her, spite and envy so mastered him that he aimed an arrow and shot her through the heart.

Besides these two foci of the city's public life, there are other spots where one seems to catch an echo of its long-hushed clamour. In the large modern square where the hotel stands, the Piazza della Rocca, many a stirring scene has been witnessed. Here stood the old fortress within which more than one pope dwelt before the palace was built. It was in this piazza that San Bernardino, in the year 1426, after completing a cycle of sermons on a spot close to the church of San Francesco hard by—a spot still marked by a pulpit—celebrated a great "Burning of Vanities" (*Bruciamiento delle Vanità*). Among the "vanities" cast upon the pyre were draught-boards, slippers, amulets, and bits of braided hair. As the bonfire shot up its first flames, the bell on the municipal tower led off a general peal from the churches.

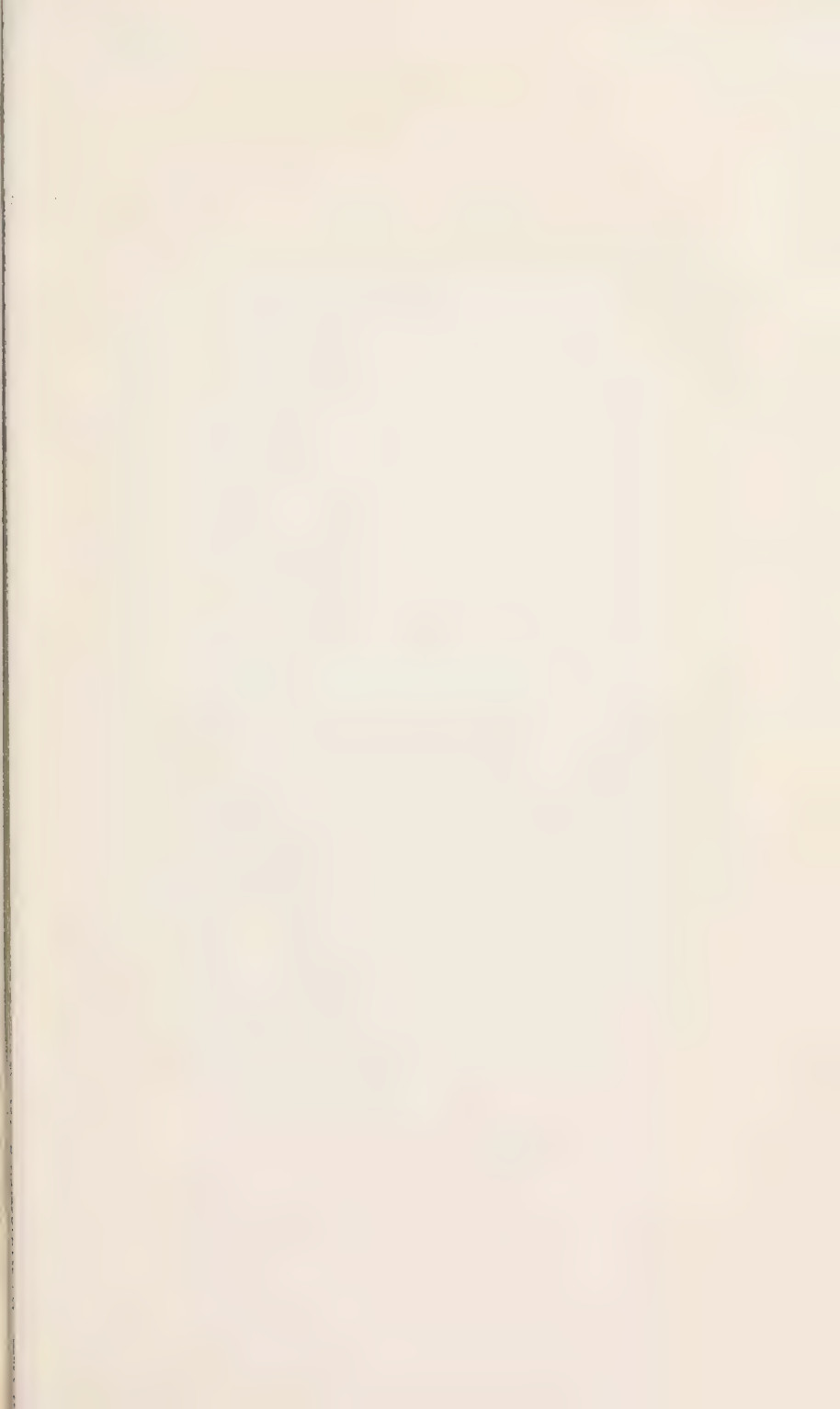
A few steps take us from this piazza to the Gothic church of San Francesco, begun in 1237. Though never completed, the transepts and chancel, with their vaulted roof and their beautiful tombs, have an impressive dignity. The finest tombs are those of the Popes Clement IV and Hadrian V, and of the Cardinals Fra



Marco and Gerardo Landriano. Another tomb, that of the Prefetto Pietro di Vico, though considerably damaged, shows traces of good sculpture. When Pope Clement died, and, according to his wishes, his body was laid in the Dominican church, Santa Maria di Gradi, and miracles were said to be wrought, bringing great gain to the church, envious greed prompted the priests of the cathedral to steal the tomb; after which, the poor Pope's remains were bandied hither and thither till only twenty years ago they were brought here for what one hopes is to be their resting-place. Pope and Prefect, bitter enemies during their lifetime, became strangely united after their death. Both died in the same year (1268); both, probably, had their mausoleums carved by the same pair of hands; and they still lie side by side in the profound peace of the tomb.

The piazza of San Gesù, which is now one of a number of uncomely, half-finished-looking squares in Viterbo, was in the old days, when the Communal Palace stood in it, a centre of life and strife. The fierce clan of Di Vico had its palace here, remains of which can still be recognised. The church, formerly that of San Silvestro, has to-day a worn and shabby aspect. It was at the high altar of this church that, in 1271, Prince Henry of Cornwall, when kneeling in prayer, was slain by Guy de Montfort and his followers in revenge for the slaying of Guy's father, Simon de Montfort, at the battle of Evesham. Although the choice of the moment when the enemy was praying in church in order to kill him was not an uncommon one in those days, Dante had good reason to single out this instance as typical of blood-thirsty violence (*Inferno*, c. XII, 118-20).

But all the remains of mediæval Viterbo are not thus





PALACE OF THE ALESSANDRI, VITERBO.

mean-looking. The city has conserved some fine examples of the best periods of its architecture, of which not the least curious and beautiful is the palace of the Alessandri in the tiny piazza of San Pellegrino. It stands in one of the most battered and shabby quarters of the town. Two sides of the square are bounded by the palace. On the larger façade is a deep grotto serving as a balcony, framed in above by the mouldings of a wide (segmental) arch. The face of the balcony has a deep parapet cornice resting on finely cut corbels. Above the gallery are mouldings with delicate pointed ornament. This part of the palace is connected by a passage, roofed over with half an arch, with a second building which, though squat-looking, has its meanness redeemed by a curious portico with stunted columns. Behind this lesser wing of the palace appear two square towers. The Alessandri were a good Guelph family which supported the Gatti when the twelfth century was giving place to the thirteenth. There are in the same piazza some small houses which show by their coat of arms that they were dependent on the baronial mansion. These houses and the half-ruined towers near the piazzetta, which are said to have belonged to enemies of the Alessandri, are eloquent of the hot fighting which must once have raged in this small and confined quarter of the city. The proud little edifice, which was saved from destruction by a special decree of Pope Innocent IV, is now occupied by modest husbandmen. There is no other surviving palace of Viterbo which can compare with it in architectural fascination; yet the fragment of the ancient palace of the Gatti (thirteenth century) and the very interesting Farnese palace (fifteenth century) are well worth inspection.

It is, however, in its churches that Viterbo has con-



served the choicest examples of its ancient architecture. They lie hidden in their tiny piazzas from the highways of the city. One of the oldest is that of San Sisto, the lower and older portion of which is said by Pinzi to date from about the beginning of the ninth century. The extension of this church in the twelfth century by the addition of a presbytery and an apse, standing on a considerably higher level, has, no doubt, marred the original design ; yet it introduces a certain element of piquant picturesqueness into the interior. This later apse, as well as the old square campanile, protrudes through the adjacent wall of the city, giving to this from outside one of its interesting details. With this one must be taken another ancient Lombard church, that of San Giovanni in Zoccoli (St. John in sandals), which forms a curious contrast with it. It is plain to the point of ascetic severity. The walls and the roof of beams are alike naked and gloomy. The only element of decoration is supplied by the bands of moulding (torus) which serve as rudiments of capitals. Everything here, says Pinzi, breathes of austerity, of mortification, of ultramundane aspiration, the spirit of the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup>

Other architectural treasures lie scattered about Viterbo and some of them require a patient search. Now one lights on an early Lombard campanile, which, though of uncouth and dumpy form, has a promise of beauty in its apertures. At another moment one discovers a small palace, much defaced, but preserving a beautiful heirloom in the shape of an external staircase

<sup>1</sup> G. T. Rivoira (*Lombardic Architecture*, I, p. 135) seems to differ from Pinzi as to the relative ages of these two churches, regarding San Giovanni as the older edifice (finished 1037), while he refers San Sisto to the first half of the twelfth century.

leading up over half an arch to a finely carved balcony. Again, one's eye is arrested by a lovely portal, once belonging to a church, decked out with dainty spiral columns, and a sort of rich frieze work, the work of some fourteenth-century sculptor. Near to this, in a poor dilapidated piazza, one comes across a blackened fountain which has the form of a font with a peaked cover, every bit of its surface being carven into floral and human forms as carefully and as daintily as if it had been a chalice. This is one of the surviving thirteenth-century sculptures which led men to name Viterbo the city, not only of beautiful women, but of beautiful fountains.

If the visitor would fully seize the spirit of old Viterbo he should wander beyond its gates, contemplate its fine battlemented wall and the many towers rising above it, glance back on the municipal and other towers of what once was called also "the turreted city" when these are touched by the glow of the setting sun,<sup>1</sup> and ruminate over the massive foundations of Frederick's castle, so rudely cut across by the wall. He will find outside the city some of its finest architectural treasures. Not far from the wall stands the church of Santa Maria della Verità, now turned into a Hall of Justice,<sup>2</sup> on the plaster of whose walls is preserved the finest painting by a Viterbese artist, the "Espousal of the Virgin," by Lorenzo di Viterbo: a work which, in spite of the low opinion of the artist held by some, deserves to be better known; whilst in its cloisters, which are said to date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, may be found tracery of a rare loveli-

<sup>1</sup> San Gimignano was still better known as the city "delle belle torri."

<sup>2</sup> This hall has acquired a recent fame from the great Camorra trial held in it.

ness. Then there is the old Dominican church, Santa Maria di Gradi, where the weary body of the Pope was not allowed to repose. Though now transformed into a penitentiary, it has preserved its large and chaste Gothic cloisters and the portico in front of its façade. A longer walk brings one to the church of Santa Maria della Quercia, with its cloisters, a handsome edifice of the fifteenth century.

Other reasons, too, will draw the visitor outside the city. He will want to see the famous hot sulphur spring, Il Bulicame (or Bullicame), i.e. boiling spring, to which Dante alludes in describing a rivulet in hell, that made him shudder again even when he wrote of it (*Inferno*, xiv, 79–81).<sup>1</sup> To the reader of the turbulent history of the city the spring might well seem to image the hot and eruptive temper of mediæval Viterbo. The visitor will be well-advised to take longer excursions also. Thus, he may drive up to the ruins of Ferento, the hostile city which the Viterbese destroyed, standing on a height and commanding a fine view. There he will find the imposing remains of a primitive Etrusco-Roman theatre. He will do well to visit other towns which had hostile doings with Viterbo: Montefiascone, for example, on its prominent hill a thousand feet above Viterbo, or Vetralla; whence, though there is little of interest in the squalid-looking town, he may walk over to the romantic Valley of Norchia, and see the long series of lofty, temple-like Etruscan tombs carven on the face of the warm yellow cliffs. And he will find new architectural beauties in the Villa Lante, an elegantly planned building of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with a lovely garden and fountain, and in Toscanella with its fine early Lombard church.

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that Dante visited Viterbo. See Christopher Hare *Dante the Wayfarer*, p. 263.

Viterbo offers the traveller, indeed, an exceptional variety of excursions. One of the most interesting ways of leaving the place is to drive up the Roman road over the slopes of Monte Cimino to Civit  Castellana. On the way he will have glorious views of Soracte and the Apennines, edged with snow, and will be able to inspect the Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola, a magnificent example of a Renaissance palace ; while farther on he will catch sight of the sombre yet deeply interesting ruins of Falerii, and, beyond these, the Etruscan tomb-chambers which flank the latter part of the road.



## VII

### A SACRED RIVER-HEAD

IT was the month of May, but a May smitten with a July heat—"un caldo di luglio"—which drove even Americans from Rome and invaded the Umbrian height on which stands Spoleto. Consequently, we needed much persuasion to draw us from the grateful shade of its narrow streets into the glare of the dusty roads. Yet our friend the Canonico prevailed on us to join him in an early morning drive to the far-famed river, Clitunno, or—to give the name its ancient Umbrian form—Clitumnus. He is a delightful companion, in whom a fund of good spirits and a merry vein play about the solid qualities of a cultivated intelligence and a modest faith. With a fine enthusiasm for classical antiquities he combines a lively interest in all the details of Church lore, its customs, its saints, and the rest. He lures us skillfully to his proposed excursion by emphasising the refreshing coolness of the wonder-working stream.

We seek to evade the heat by starting early, before the white mists lying in the hollows of the mountains have been chased away by the sun. Yet even at this hour, as we drive along the old Roman highway to the north—the Via Flaminia—we seem to detect harbingers of the hot noon in the masses of glowing poppy in the fields and in the black sharply edged shadows of the overhanging tiles on the walls of the farm-houses. On the wide plain of the valley and on the mountain-sides tower after tower of castle or church shoots up

and disappears as we pass ; while behind us our hanging city of Spoleto remains visible—the most romantic city that Shelley, as he tells us, had ever seen—well guarded by her high-set and spacious Rocca, and, set higher yet on a green hill, her church of St. Giuliano, which, though a ruin, still stands to symbolise a heavenly protection.

Our road inclines to the base of the fine mountains to the right, and soon brings us within sight of a group of tall poplars which marks the sacred head of our river, the celebrated sources, Le Vene. A sparkle of the water as it flows out from under the rock is visible through the foliage. Farther on we can trace the flow of the river running below us to the left.

It looks a tiny thing to have made so great a stir. The poet Propertius, in an elegy in which he praises the beauties of Italy to a friend whose return to Rome he desires, names it, along with the Anio, as one of the land's fairest streams ; and other poets, ancient and modern, have repeated its praises. It became one of the great sights of Italy, drawing to its banks even emperors like Caligula and Honorius. An English sportsman might call it a nice little trout stream, and think of his own clear waters. Nor does an imposing length compensate for its narrowness, since it loses its name at Bevagna (the ancient Mevania), some nine miles below its source, near which St. Francis preached to his "Brother birds" ; and, not far below this, loses, too, its separate existence by pouring its waters into the Tiber. An American, calling to mind his own rivers, might say that no other stream had ever received per square foot of its surface so ridiculous an amount of laudation. Yet, though our first impression is one of disappointing smallness, we soon begin to

realise that it is in verity the wondrous and sacred stream of which we read in Virgil, Pliny the younger, and other Latin authors.

A mile or so below Le Vene we reach a dainty building known as the Temple of Clitumnus. It stands above the river, and so close to the road that the upper part of its hinder wall makes a parapet for it. In external form it is a small graceful temple or chapel (*sacellum*). But a closer examination shows that it is not one of the temples of the Augustan Age which once stood on these banks. Its façade is almost too pretty for this, with its twisted and other colonnettes. The amiable desire of our Canon to maintain local tradition has to give way on this point. We succeed in bringing back to his mobile face the look of broad contentment by stretching a point, and conceding that though not the temple in which, as Pliny tells us, the god Clitumnus was once enshrined, it may well have been erected on its site, and perhaps have embodied a part of the primitive masonry. According to recent authorities it was probably erected and dedicated as a church to Our Saviour (Il Salvatore) as late as the middle of the fifth century, and to some extent restored in the twelfth century. We have no eye to-day for cross or other symbol of the later faith, but abandon ourselves to a vision of the ancient temple in which dwelt the river-god—not reclining in majestic ease, with serene, complacent visage, like the allegorical figures we see in Rome, but a very god of ancient Umbrian cult, standing fully draped, as Pliny tells us, with a veil over his head, mysterious and awful.

It is Pliny who tells us of the ancient temple as well as of much else pertaining to the river. The letter in which he does so is one of the most delightful of his



1. SOURCES OF THE CLITUMNUS (UMBRIA).  
2. TEMPLE OF CLITUMNUS.





epistles, and indeed of all the short letters of which we know. It is written to a friend, "Romanus," who, since the writer addresses him in the most intimate terms, and shows himself to be perfectly familiar with his inclinations and tastes, is pretty certainly Viconius Romanus, the friend whom, in another letter, he warmly recommends for promotion to Priscus, the commander of the army in which Romanus serves; describing him as the friend of his youth, his fellow-student, the sharer of his rooms in town and country, and bound to him by common jokes as well as by serious thoughts. The letter to Romanus is clearly written with a running pen. Pliny, we may conjecture, has been staying on the banks of the Clitumnus and enjoying its wonders; and just as the first impulse of an expansive German tourist of to-day, on visiting Tivoli or other famous sight in Italy, is to despatch an illustrated postcard to his betrothed or some bosom friend, so Pliny dashes off this note to the friend with whom long habit prompts him to share his pleasures. He begins by asking whether Romanus has ever seen the source of the river, and urges him, if he has not, to see it soon. He extols the charms of the water and its coolness, which vies with that of the snow, while in respect of colour it does not fall behind. He enlarges on the delights of boating on the stream, which has so strong a current that one drifts down merrily enough, but has to use oar and pole to get up, thus securing the desirable alternation of exertion and ease. Had he lived to-day and known winter sports in Switzerland, he might have compared the experience with that of dragging the "luge" up the steep snow-bank followed by the swift glissade. He then speaks of the temples and of the river deity, to whose immediate presence

the prophetic oracles bear testimony, and of the villas and baths, adding—what was likely to influence a youngster not overburdened with cash—that the good people to whom Augustus had given the place entertained strangers at their own expense. “In short” (he writes), “every surrounding object will afford you entertainment.” He ends by a half-serious, half-facetious allusion to the inscriptions, which his friend will find on the pillars and walls, celebrating the virtues of the spring and its divinity.

Other writers tell us of the miracles wrought by the river. The tract of rich pasturage through which it flows, both above and below Trevi (the ancient Trebia), was famous for a breed of oxen specially prized for their snowy whiteness. The traffic in these is still recorded by the name of the village—“Bovara,” the ancient “Forum Boarium”—which lies on the mountain-slope about two miles below the temple. They were in great request as victims for sacrifices. Virgil tells us that the oxen, especially the bulls, were selected for their beauty as victims to precede victors in their triumphal processions. Juvenal, when he wishes to express the depth of his gratitude for the safe landing of Catullus after a perilous voyage, says that he has vowed a lamb to Juno and a steer to Jove, but would, had he been rich enough, have offered a huge bull fattened by the rich pastures of the Clitumnus.

A pious tradition ascribed the preternatural whiteness of these oxen to the action of the clear bright water. According to the poets—Virgil, Propertius, and Claudian—they were laved white by bathing in the stream. Another version—for which the authority of Pliny is questionably claimed—regards their whiteness as the result of drinking the water.

Much of the ancient glory of the river has departed. The temples, baths, and villas have vanished; the joyous life, too, half pleasure, half worship, comparable with that of a modern Italian *fiesta*, has been silenced. No longer will the visitor see stately figures moving with slow step towards the temple or the sacred wood, nor well-fed oxen driven to their purifying bath; no longer will he hear the cries of bargemen whose craft have got entangled in the rushes of the banks, or interlocked one with another. For a moment we are touched by the elegiac mood of Carducci, whose lines our learned guide recites, giving full resonance to the rich Italian vowels.

“Tutto ora tace, o vedovo Clitunno, tutto :  
De' vaghi tuoi delubri un solo t'avanza,  
E dentro pretestato nume tu non vi siedì.”<sup>1</sup>

And yet, as we look at the river to-day, it is not the vanishing of old-world things which strikes us; so much seems to be still just what it was then. What has disappeared is the adventitious—the architecture and the human life. But the river itself and its natural surroundings live on much as they were. The clear, glittering stream, flowing smoothly and swiftly between its rushy banks, as one may see it from the road, or lower down from the window of the train, is just what Pliny saw. Nor has the vegetation altered much, for though the sacred grove of cypresses which once stood above the source may have gone, the poplars still lend to the bank its procession of august worshippers. Even though the famous breed of snowy oxen is said to have exhausted itself, we find that to-day, as in the early

<sup>1</sup> “All is now silent, oh widowed Clitumnus, all :  
Of thy lovely temples only one remains to thee,  
And within it, a veiled deity, thou hast no seat.”



days of the Roman Empire, cattle come down in the evening to drink of the waters. To quote Carducci again :

“Ancor dal monte . . .

Scendon nel vespero umido, o Clitunno  
A te le greggi.”

And local tradition, oddly enough, preserves the old faith in the whitening virtue of the sacred waters. To us, at any rate, in our uncritical mood, the miraculous bleaching is sufficiently suggested by the peasant women, whom we see near one of the single-arched bridges, plunging their linen into the stream. Then there are the remains of the ancient buildings, the amphitheatre at Bevagna, and better still, the solitary little temple—a charming fraud if you like, but old enough to help us in our re-creative day-dream of the things of the past.

It is, however, at the source of the river, its sacred fountain-head, that we get nearest to the vanished scene ; for though there are here no stony memorials, nature and man seem to have covenanted for once to conserve an ancient and revered spot. The pure sparkling water still flows out from under the limestone rock below our road as Pliny describes, not in a boisterous torrent, as the Anio issues, but in a number of gentle rivulets, some larger, some smaller. These unite a few paces down to form a broad pool or basin, as if their waters were not clear enough and they paused to deposit some invisible impurities. The unfailing spring still “forces its way through the pool which it has made,” emerging as “a pure and glassy stream.” The pool is studded with green islands, pleasantly shaded

by poplars and weeping willows. Pliny speaks of the poplar and the ash ; and the latter, as Carducci tells us, still murmurs in the wind on the mountain-slopes above. As to the brilliant clearness of the pool, it sets us at once peering into its light-shot depths, where, if we do not find the shining pebbles and votive coins of which Pliny wrote, we perceive with perfect distinctness each blade of the algæ, each separate star of the decorative weeds on its glittering floor. So little of change is here that when our clerical friend quotes Pliny's letter we feel as if he were reading from some modern guide-book.

This susceptible gentleman is fairly bewitched by the shining depths, whose internal light, set against the background of umbrageous trees, reminds us of the famous grotto of Capri. He hurries hither and thither like a gladsome child, calling our attention to some new marvel of the aquatic world ; so that an onlooker might rather regard him as the one having his first spiritual immersion in the waters, and his less demonstrative companions as dulled by familiarity with the scene. His bright, keen eye searches the transparent depths as if for treasure. And when it lights on treasure, in the shape of a royal trout lying in stately repose in one of the lustrous hollows, or hiding his head under a grassy bank, he grows quite excited. A word from us would probably suffice to set him tickling the fish, half asleep from the growing heat, and so risking his fair fame by an act of petty larceny. When he sees a boat moored to one of the islands, unmindful of his skirts and thinking only of Pliny, he rushes across the narrow wooden bridge to seize the bark, only to return with crestfallen look and report that it is water-logged.

We cannot help wondering whether Pliny saw and

rejoiced in all this gorgeous colouring of the pool. His only allusion to colour is when he speaks of the water as snowy. He seems here to be confusing what we moderns mean by whiteness with great brightness. Had he been familiar with glacier streams he would perhaps have distinguished. One may infer from this and from his silence about the variegated tints of the bottom of the pool that, like others of his time, he was but little susceptible to the distinctive charm of colour. To us, at any rate, as we feast our eyes on the beauties of the pool, it is not the mere brilliance of its inner light which holds us spellbound, but the prismatic variety of vivid and lustrous tint into which this light breaks up—the various greens of the aquatic plants, the warmer tints of the exposed earth, and the gleaming silvery blues of the cup-like hollows where springs are said to rise.

All is still in this cool retreat, even the poplar leaves. We do not need their rustling sound to add to our sense of the coolness. The silence itself seems to-day to reinforce the feeling. One of the tiny sources makes a little fall, and this gives forth a soft tinkling sound. Now and again our ear catches the faint twitter of a bird or the croaking of a distant frog, both half hypnotised like the trout by the rising heat. This is all the sound that the acutest ear can detect, and it serves merely to punctuate the deep silence. The stillness of things, the drowsy willows bending over our heads, the gathering heat which is felt to be near, most of all the crystal-gazing into the pellucid waters, dispose us to an inalert, somnolent state of mind, favourable to the indulgence of pleasing illusions. Our watchful guide, perceiving our acquiescent condition, plies us with stories of the miracles wrought by the river. Among others he gives us a

modern and less preposterous variant of the ancient legend of its miraculous power; according to which a glass bottle, if left a fortnight in the stream, will come out with a rosy or amethystine tint. So sure is he of our easy receptive mood that, though a man of delicate consideration for others' feelings, he does not trouble to qualify his bold assertions by "*si dice*" ("it is said"), which other clerical ciceroni in Italy are wont to add when reciting miracles to sight-seers who may be suspected of scepticism. So little disposed, indeed, are we at this moment to be scientifically exacting that we find ourselves beginning to re-create the charming old myths of Clitumnus. One of these is recited by the late Roman poet, Claudian, in his panegyric of Honorius. He reminds the Emperor that when visiting the Clitumnus he had not overlooked the miracle of the source, the waters of which, when one approaches softly, move slowly, whereas, if one rushes on them noisily, they become agitated and turbulent. He adds that although it is certainly the nature of all streams to mirror the objects near them, only this one can boast of being able to imitate human behaviour. Looking into the glassy pool one easily glides into this sort of optical illusion.<sup>1</sup> The absence of all floating particles on the surface of the pure water leaves us uncertain whether it is still or moving. Only a soft, tremulous movement due to the little cascade can be detected. Hence, as we continue to gaze, we find ourselves taking the surface to be still or moving according as our fancy wavers. And we feel in our present mood as if we could easily succeed in reproducing the greater wonder revealed to the Emperor.

<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, it appears to have been a complex illusion, of hearing as well as of sight.



The secret of the river's fascination lies in its dazzling and preternatural clearness. Just as it was "pure and glassy" to Pliny, so to Byron when he wrote :

"Thy sweetest wave  
Of the most living crystal that was e'er  
The haunt of river nymph."

This surpassing purity is the source of its dazzling beauty—of its crystalline brilliance as well as of its vivid luminous tints. It is at the root, too, of the graceful myths which have added to its fame. So far as they involve the idea of snowy water transferring its colour to the cattle which bathe in it, or drink of it, they seem to illustrate the habit of mind of the child and the savage, when they argue as if men and animals ought to acquire the qualities of what is taken into their bodies. Yet the superstition has a firmer basis than this. We know that the river divinities were regarded as giving fertility, not only to the land, but to the people. This shows that the veneration of them rested on a practical idea, that of their utility to men. The sanctity of river-heads, as of springs generally, especially those which had pure as well as cool water—a sanctity illustrated in the horror which was excited by Nero's impious act when he defiled the source of the Aqua Marcia by bathing in it—reposed on a sense of the great value of pure water, not only for drinking, but for bathing and cleansing generally. As with the marvellous cleansing powers of the Clitumnus, so with its supernatural gift of imitating the movements and sounds of mortals. We all tend in dreamy uncritical moments to project our own moods, and even our own movements, into the objects which surround us ; and the effect on the spectator's mind of crystal-gazing into the magic clearness of this

stream would strongly predispose him to this kind of illusion.

The day's heat grows apace, and, fearful of the full noonday glare, we tear ourselves from the river's fascination. We, too, feel like Byron—who must, one thinks, have been here on just such a day as ours—that the freshness of the scene has known how to sprinkle its coolness on our heart and

“from the dry dust  
Of weary life a moment lave it clean  
With nature's baptism.”

Our indefatigable guide insists on our stopping at the village of San Giacomo where his friend, the “parroco,” will show us the frescoes of Lo Spagna. But though the Canon does his best to whip up our flagging enthusiasm, the tender graces of form and soft harmonies of colour of the Umbrian painters fail for once to exercise their charm; while the problem of discriminating a genuine work of Lo Spagna from that of a pupil and imitator makes no appeal to our drowsy faculties. Nor does it fare better with us when we inspect the crumbling walls of the large mediæval castle opposite the church, which to-day harbours peasants domiciled in slummy-looking alleys. These mediæval things fall out of their historical perspective, and look far off and outworn after the living freshness of the classic river. Our enthusiastic guide is not imposed on by our forced attempts to look interested in his saints, their miracles, and their weird symbols. He is just a little shocked for a moment by our apathy, till he reflects that not only are we jaded with the heat, but that for this one day another miracle-worker, Clitumnus, claims us for his worshippers.

## VIII

### TERRACINA

**I**F in the early spring, after a couple of months of the Tramontana, you desire an easy escape from Rome to a warmer shelter, as was my case in the year 1905, you are likely to be recommended to try Fiumicino or Anzio. You will hardly hear of Terracina unless your informant happens to know that you are fairly hardy and have some taste for antiquities. It is a place, you will gather, which is occasionally visited by motorists. To reach it by rail, though it is only seventy-six miles from the capital, one must give up the larger part of a day. If you venture on the journey, you run the risk of becoming an object of commiseration to your chance fellow-traveller—a young officer, perhaps, who, on hearing of your destination, will exclaim with the southern warmth of protestation, “ Ma è una città morta ! ” And, should you urge the compensation for slow travelling, “ chi va piano va sano,” you are not unlikely to get as a retort the roguish tag, “ e va lontano e non arriva mai.” Yet slow travelling has its consolations when the Italian sun shines and one’s route runs across the Roman Campagna and under the Alban Hills. The hours of enforced delay at Velletri, too, will fill themselves pleasantly with the good cheer of the hospitable inn, with a stroll through the old town, and with a climb on the steep hill behind it. From here one surveys, to the left, the low sweep of the Volscian Mountains, swooning away in the haze as they approach the sea at Terracina, and in front,

beyond the many-tinted levels of the Pontine Marshes, Monte Circeo rearing itself like an island above a glimmer of sea. Beyond Velletri the railway follows the winding contour of the mountains just above the Marshes. It is not the right way to approach Terracina, which ought to be first seen from the straight stretch of the Via Appia after passing Velletri. Horace saw it thus, "set on rocks which gleam white from afar"; and travellers in modern times from Rome to Naples, before the railways came, approached it in the same way.

A short tour of inspection reveals the superb position of Terracina. The Volscian Mountains turn here in a gentle curve seawards, terminating in a bold headland, the Monte S. Angelo. On the west side of the hill the city slopes towards the plain where lie the sinister Pontine Marshes—"urbs prona in paludes," as Livy describes it. The gleaming masses of limestone on the heights give place lower down to cultivated soil, fruitful with vines, olives, and corn. Its sheltered site near the sea and its southern aspect secure for the place a singularly soft climate, which, though debilitating in the summer, is purely enjoyable in the early spring. So noble a situation, lifted above the malarious marshes, a meeting-place of sea and mountain breezes, was marked out by nature for a city of importance. Its value was recognised by the ancient Volscians, who erected here one of their chief towns; and it remained a place of note after it was conquered by the Romans and through later ages.

"Terracina" is the modern form of the name given to the town by the Romans (Tarracina or Tarracinae). Its original Volscian name was Anxur; and this was used by Horace and other Latin poets, possibly in part



because it lent itself better to the requirements of verse. Some say that the primitive name referred to a youthful tutelary deity who afterwards came to be identified with the Roman Jupiter. The fragments of the ancient Volscian city still extant suggest that it was a place of first-rate importance. It probably enabled the sturdy Volscian race to extend its territory northwards to Velletri and Antium (Anzio) and southwards as far as Cumae.

The conquest of Terracina by the Romans was a long and arduous business. The year 397 B.C. is given as the date of the completion of its subjection; and by the year 348 a Latin colony was founded here. Anxur was a port, the Volscians having been one of the first Italian peoples to construct a harbour with a pier. The port was greatly improved under the Romans, especially after the construction of the Via Appia (312 B.C.). This famous road from Rome to southern Italy passed through Terracina, the only point where it touched the sea. This of itself would give importance to the place, since much of the merchandise sent to Rome from the south would be landed here. In addition, the celebrated defile to the east of Monte S. Angelo, known to the Romans as Lautulae, was the natural entrance from southern Italy into Latium; and its proximity gave great strategic value to the town. It became the customary stopping-place for travellers from Rome to the south; and in this way the Romans came to hear of its mild salubrious climate and its famous mineral springs, which vied with those of Baiae. By the year 200 B.C. a considerable number of patrician families had erected villas here; and towards the end of the Republic the town became one of the principal places to which the Romans repaired for their villeggiatura, sharing the

honour with the line of coast between Antium and Circeii.

The reign of Augustus brought a new prosperity to Terracina ; and this prosperity was maintained and increased during the first two centuries of the Empire. The town was enlarged, and a new quarter of villas with amphitheatre, baths, etc., sprang up on the plain below, reaching beyond the canal. Of the splendour which fell on Terracina in the prosperous Roman days we have a hint in the Greek statue of Sophocles in the Lateran Museum, found in this quarter of the town in 1838. Under Trajan and Antoninus Pius the old port was improved by the addition of piers, docks, and vaulted warehouses, so that it was able to compete with Antium and Cumae. The prosperity of the city was greatly furthered by the renovation, on solid substructures, of the Via Appia by Nerva and Trajan.

The decline of Rome after the reign of Diocletian, and the invasion of Italy by the barbarians, made a rude end of this prosperity. In common with the whole of the Roman Campagna, the territories about Terracina were depopulated and fell out of cultivation, becoming a great morass and a breeding-ground for the malarial germ. The Via Appia went out of repair, so that even the comparatively few noble Roman families surviving were unable to visit the city. In addition, the port became choked up with sand, and the city was seriously damaged by fire. As a result of all this, the population dwindled to a small number of fever-stricken families. Yet the old mountain-town showed a dogged vitality. Christianity is said to have marked out the place for one of her first sanctuaries, and for the scene of some of her early martyrdoms. It is possible that St. Paul, who passed through Terracina on his way from Pozzuoli to

Rome, dropped a seed which afterwards germinated into a religious community. However this be, a church was erected here, and probably a bishopric too, soon after the official recognition of the new religion by Constantine. A vigorous attempt to revive some of the past greatness of the town was made towards the end of the fifth century by Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, who added to its defences and went some way towards overcoming the two great evils which had led to its abandonment, by a partial draining of the marshes and by a new restoration of the Via Appia. Theodoric's brave efforts had, however, no lasting effect. When Rome fell into utter ruin and misery under later invasions, Terracina sank into a second and yet profounder state of neglect and penury.

At an early date the town appears to have been claimed by the papacy as lying within its territory. Its position, at the extreme limit of this territory, and open to the sea, exposed it to attack. From the time of Gregory the Great we read of a series of attempts, by both Greeks and Lombards (who sometimes joined their forces), to seduce the citizens from their allegiance to the Papal See ; while, so late as the time of Charlemagne, the Neapolitans and the Greeks managed to invade and occupy the town. In addition to these attacks by land, it suffered, during the ninth century, from assaults by sea from the Saracens ; and on one occasion was taken and ravaged by these marauders, when, it is supposed, its ancient forum was destroyed. The fear of losing their frontier-town led two popes in the eleventh century to place it under the guardianship of a carefully selected papal delegate.

The conquest of southern Italy by the Normans made an end of most of these attacks on Terracina. Gregory

VII gave self-government to the city (1074), after which date it could boast of possessing a senate, consuls, and the rest. Soon after this, Terracina is referred to as a place visited by the popes, one being crowned here, another laying down his crown ; while others, including Gelasius II, the unhappy bearer of the mantle for a few months only, sought refuge in the town from Emperor and Antipope. Among the harassers who drove the popes to this place of refuge were the powerful and warlike clans which caused so much turmoil and pillage in Italy during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Frangipani appear to have seized Terracina for a time, since we read of the Rocca or Castello which they erected here, a building afterwards destroyed and rebuilt by the citizens in the reign of Eugenius III (1145-53). In Terracina, as elsewhere in Italy, the hour of fierce battle, with its din and confusion, was also the hour of a vigorous architectural self-recreation. In the thirteenth century, which marks the zenith of its mediæval greatness, it could boast of three castles and a goodly number of churches and monasteries. It was in this century, too, that the cathedral was improved and redecorated.

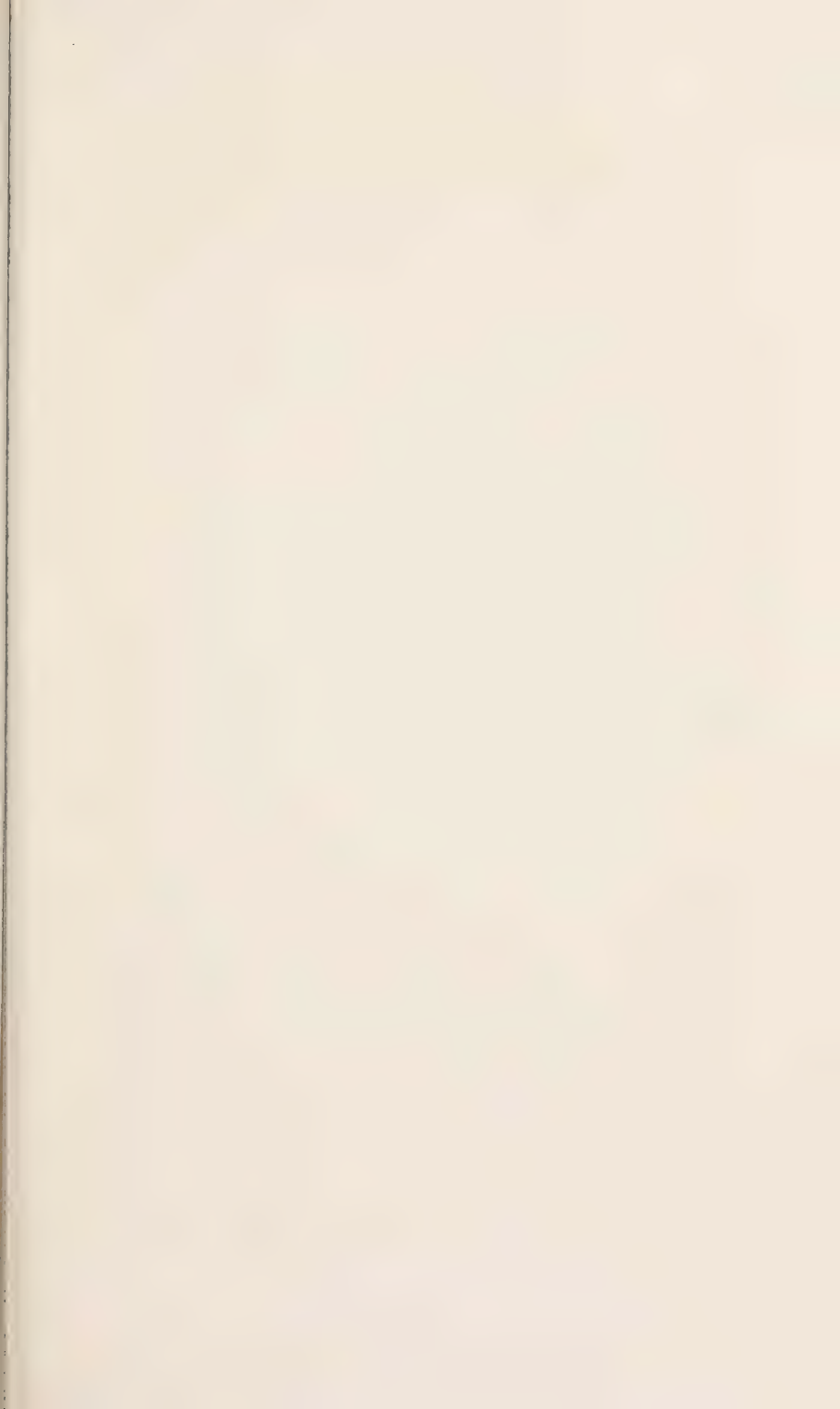
The continuation of attempts to capture Terracina, including a successful one by Naples, led Pius II in 1460, on receiving from its inhabitants a petition to take over the city, to entrust the custody of it to his nephew, Antonio Piccolomini. It did not, however, enter on a lasting peace before the year of general pacification, 1499. Even then, though peace had been secured, other causes than war continued to keep down the population. The adjacent lowlands were invaded by marshes ; and in the sixteenth century an epidemic broke out that again reduced the number of inhabitants. Towards the end of this century the work of draining the marshes was



seriously begun ; but it was not until the close of the eighteenth century that a considerable improvement was effected by Pius VI, who cut the canal, Linea Pia, which runs by the side of the Via Appia.

A passing word must be added on the material loss which Terracina suffered in the last century. Before the Italian railways were constructed, travellers from Rome to Naples had passed through the town, making it, like Horace, a halting-place. The opening of the railway route *viâ* Cassino diverted the current of tourists, adding another abandonment to the history of Terracina. The change meant a certain loss, not only to the town, where, we are told, there had been a good inn, but to the travellers, who have since missed seeing a beautiful and most interesting part of Italy.

Some ancient Italian cities are literally *città morte*, their stream of life being quite dried up, whether they show an imposing mass of ancient buildings like Pompeii or Selinunte, or, like Cumae, are hardly more than sepulchral tumuli, in which vestiges of the past life must wait for their resurrection until the archæological purse grows heavier. From these wholly dead cities, there stand apart others which still live on, preserving in a more or less recognisable form their ancient name. And among these again we may distinguish such as disclose no considerable memorials of their antiquity, from those which expose to the stranger's gaze, in clear and impressive lineaments, a record of their remote history. Terracina falls into a category intermediate between the extremes of the purely ancient and the largely modern type. It is a populous and thriving town to-day, even though it lies in a backwater of the stream of progress ; at the same time it shows the stranger, with great clearness and an almost lavish fullness, monuments





TAGLIO DI PESCO MONTANO AND MONTE S. ANGELO, TERRACINA.

of its ancient history. Not only have we vestiges of its mediæval story, but the Roman occupation has left us a number of noble relics, while even the older Volscian city still speaks to us out of imposing fragments of cyclopean masonry.

From the hotel on the Marina the visitor will naturally begin his exploration of the city by turning to the adjacent east gate, the Porta di Napoli. To the right lies the little bay in which fishing boats gently rock themselves in the sun. To the left rises the smooth surface of a vertical rock of some hundred and twenty feet, bearing a series of incised Roman numerals, which mark the height downward from the top. This is the ancient cutting now known as "Taglio di Pesco Montano." When Appius planned his road, the rocky end of the promontory reached the sea, and so the road had to be carried up above Terracina round the hinder slope of Monte S. Angelo. In order to avoid the toilsome passage, an attempt was made by the Roman engineers so early as the year 184 B.C. to construct a raised causeway in the sea. Since, however, this was practicable only for pedestrians, one of the earlier emperors resolved on the yet bolder expedient of cutting a gap in the rocky promontory, and so keeping the road to the south on the low level near the sea. The Pesco Montano, which is hardly noticed by the old travel books, is certainly one of the curious sights of Italy, illustrating a noteworthy side of Roman engineering.

Turning back past the hotel we reach a large modern piazza, where is modestly hidden away a little museum of antiquities, which the local archæologist, Cav. Capponi, will be pleased to show the visitor. Following the low road farther westward we reach the canal, the mouth of which makes the harbour of the town. After



crossing it we find ourselves on the Molo, by following which to its head we gain a fine view of Monte S. Angelo, its limestone heights radiant in the sun, while lower, where its steep slopes break into bolder cliffs, the whiteness gives place to rich warm tints. On the crest against the sky there gleams, like a silver crown, a low arcade, evidently the substructure of some ancient building. This ruin, visible also from the plain to the west, seems to stamp Terracina with a patent of nobility. Walking a little farther westward, we light on a weird group of blocks of Roman masonry, suggestive of tables overturned in some drunken orgy. To such ignoble forms has the sea's irresistible might reduced the compact structures with which the Antonines furnished the ancient harbour. Recrossing the canal and continuing our walk westward, we reach a hamlet of straw huts (*capanne*). From this point we obtain a fine view of the town, turreted with a lofty castle and a square campanile, above which the arcade is seen crouching like a watch-dog.

It is strange that a place thus superbly lifted above the sea in a fair garden of shrubs, amid white rocks and a rich diversity of fruit trees and wild flowers, should have remained almost unnoticed by the earlier travellers. The indifference of Evelyn, indicated in a single erroneous remark on the old town, which, he declares, "stands on a very eminent promontory Cercean by name," illustrates the common attitude of those for whom Terracina was only a place to lunch or sleep at. It was not until the last decade of the eighteenth century that the conspicuous and arresting beauty of the place began to be noticed. Beckford, one of the first avowed lovers of Italian landscape, was struck with the loveliness of the scene as he approached the city in the morn-

ing hour, when "the sunbeams began to shoot athwart the mountains, the plains to light up by degrees, and their shrubberies of myrtle to glisten with dewdrops." The German writer Kotzebue, who travelled in 1804-5, recognised Terracina's "noble site," and the beauty of its steep rocks and its citron gardens. But it was a greater poet, Shelley, who, some fourteen years later, first seized the sublimity of the place where "precipitous conical crags of immense height shoot into the sky and overhang the sea." Not long afterwards Hans Andersen discovered the rosemary and gilliflowers growing in the crevices of the high rocks.

After a preliminary inspection of Terracina from below, the traveller may strike up a steepish ascent, branching off from the Marina road near the large piazza, and examine the town from within. On his way up he may meet a band of boys and girls returning from the morning school, and be struck by their look of robust health, and their orderly behaviour. The fair promise in the girls' figures and faces could hardly escape an eye alert for beauty. A Frenchman, J. J. Bouchard, noticed the bloom of the Terracinese women in 1632; though he rather spoiled his compliment by remarking that he hardly knew which to admire the more, "the beauty of the women or the excellence and low price of the fish." This road takes us straight to the common centre of the Roman and of the later city, the piazza floored with great travertine slabs, which, as the still legible inscription on it tells us, A. Æmilius, a chief personage among the resident patricians of the early Empire, laid down for his Forum.

One side of the piazza is filled by the cathedral. Its façade is a singular one, made up of heterogeneous features: a row of ancient Ionic columns with lions

crouching on the pedestals, surmounted by an architrave which consists of a frieze of white marble sculptures and mosaics, possibly of the twelfth century; above which is a series of open pointed arches; the whole being capped by a later and rather commonplace Renaissance façade. The mixture of styles seems remarkable even to one familiar with old Italian churches; and the visitor might easily take the whole design to be a symbolic epitome of the architectural history of the city from classical to Renaissance days. As if to accentuate the incongruities of the façade, there stands, close by, the old campanile, whose four tiers of arcades with their dainty columns stamp it with a venerable and noble simplicity. The letters S.P.Q.T. on the front of the belfry look as if they were helping the Ionic columns of the façade to bring the church into a certain measure of congruity with its classic site. The Cathedral stands on the spot where once rose an ancient temple, attributed by some to Apollo, by others to Rome and Augustus, and possibly dedicated by the same Æmilius who laid down the pavement. Two columns as well as the substructures of this temple are to be seen in the Cathedral to-day.

Issuing from the church the visitor should pass to the right of its façade under a dark archway leading to a narrow street, or *vicolo*. Here, just behind the Cathedral, he will catch a glimpse of fluted columns and a frieze of scroll-work. This street marks the spot where the Via Appia on the Roman side of the city approached the Forum. It is a characteristic bit of the old town, narrow and murky, and rendered squalid-looking by the grimy weather-stains on its walls. Yet for the eye of an artist it should have a peculiar charm. It is the spot where the easy-going Terracinese indulge in their slow

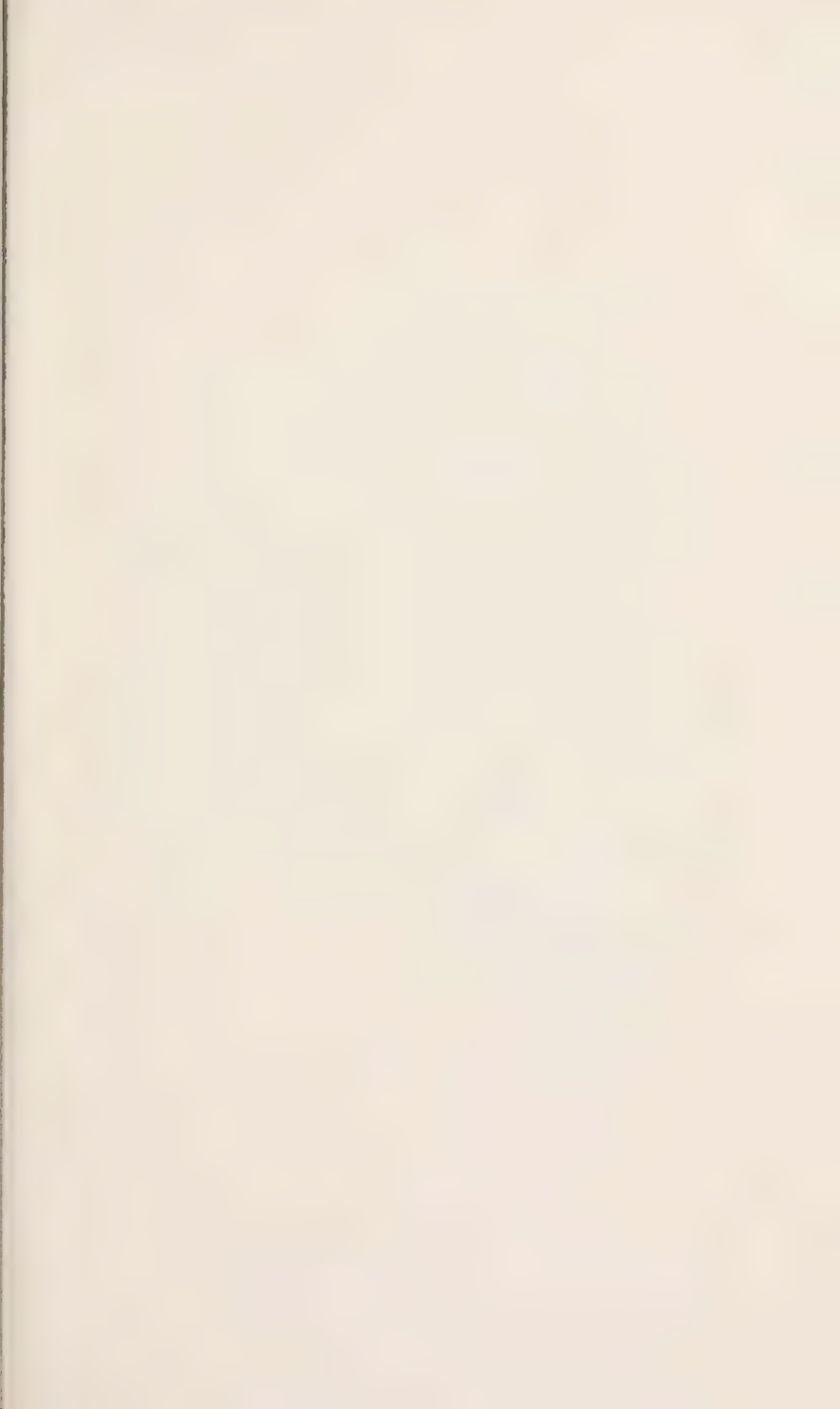
shopping. Women and children throng the pavement, many sitting on doorsteps or on the pavement itself, expressing in their languid, upward glance at the passing stranger a half-Oriental detachment. Piles of vegetables and fruit add their colours to the hues of the dresses, which together decorate the gloom with their rich half-tones. This is the place for seeing how well the Terracinese thrive in their narrow and crowded streets. If the air of their dwellings is apt to be tainted by impurities, the sea-breezes bring their purifying freshness. They have, too, an abundance of cheap meat, vegetables, and fruit. Nor must we forget the excellent wine, which is advertised in this street on little sign-boards by the cabalistic symbols, three oranges, three small twigs with green leaves, or three curls of white paper. The number three, you will learn, gives the price of the wine, three soldi per litre; the oranges and the green leaves both, oddly enough, indicate red wine, while the bits of paper denote white wine.

Following the street down its gentle descent, we note other fragments of classical architecture, both in the street itself, and in the alleys opening out of it; now a column with a fragment of entablature, now a block of masonry in which bands of white stone alternate with brick or terra-cotta. Delightful surprises of this kind are not uncommon in Terracina, where, with the Director of the museum as guide, you may find, embedded in the wall of a shabby little room, a fluted column of white marble; and, on the floor of another lowly room, a bit of the pavement of the Via Appia. At the lower end of the street we reach a gate flanked by two towers. It was here that the ancient road from Rome entered Terracina. It is quiet enough to-day; yet perhaps the stillness helps the visitor the better to call up fancy-



pictures of scenes in the old Roman days—say of the commotion at the gate when some distinguished visitor arrived from the capital. One would fain have seen Horace arrive here, after the horrors of the canal and its gnats had been added to the bumpings of the carriage on the hard and not too level pavement. His face, which the laving in the fountain of Feronia could hardly have reduced to normal proportions, may have taken on a joyous flush as, approaching Terracina, he caught sight of its cool and spacious villas, and knew that he was presently to be joined by his friend in one of the most hospitable of them, there to banquet on fish, fowl, fruits, and the best of wines, and to add to the good cheer the higher Epicurean pleasures of witty talk.

A steep, broken, and particularly dirty track, running up to the right from the road connecting the Marina with the town, will take the visitor to a plateau crowned by sloping olive gardens. It is a tiny piazza, with a parapet over which one looks down on the sea. It has but one building, the old convent, S. Francesco. This site, too, has had its secular transformations. Like Terracina as a whole, it is a spot admirably fitted to impress a traveller from a country which has no past with the wealth of historical meaning which lurks under many a shabby exterior in Italy. From some remains of cyclopean masonry hard by, it has been supposed that the ancient Volscian city included the plateau. Tradition says that on the site of the convent there once stood a Roman temple; while Blanchère tells us that the convent stands in the ruins of a palace of the Emperor Galba. To-day the building has ceased to be a convent and has been turned into a hospital. It can boast of no architectural beauty, yet it attracts the glance we give to curious forms by the huge pointed





CASTELLO AND MONTE CIRCEO IN DISTANCE, TERRACINA.

arches of its tiny vestibule, and still more by the quaintly fashioned dumpy towers which top its roof. But to one not specially antiquarian in his tastes the piazza is chiefly visit-worthy for its wondrous view. Below is the Marina looking out over the Tyrrhenian sea. Higher up to the right runs a ridge of the mediæval town peaked with towers. At the same level to the left, on the sheltered slopes, are spacious orchards of orange and lemon trees and cactuses. Farther away to the right winds the soft curve of a bay, edging the sea's intense blue with a border of soft warm colour, beyond which rises Monte Circeo, softly outlined in the haze, seeming to warn the mariner off from the pestilent marshes.

By climbing among the olives above S. Francesco we soon reach another fine point of view. The picture which it offers has for its chief feature the big pile of the Castello, detaching itself with an audacious prominence in the foreground. It towers above the Bay, above Monte Circeo, into the purer levels of the sky's blue. The hardness of its rectangular outlines is relieved by its glowing colour. Below the pile are the old olive trees, responding with a silvery gleam to the greeting of the morning sun.

From the Convent of S. Francesco one can pass up to the summit of Monte S. Angelo. It is a stiff climb over a broken and trackless ground, and on a hot morning the limestone boulders are likely to try the visitor's temper as well as his footgear; though there are consolations in the lovely flowers which flourish under their shelter. One begins to feel fully rewarded for the exertion on reaching an extensive piece of Roman fortified wall, formed of well-fitting stones of various shapes, with circular towers and posterns well preserved. Passing



through a gap of this wall, we soon find ourselves on the summit of the hill (748 ft.). It commands the finest view obtainable near Terracina, embracing to the right the ample sweep of the Volscian Hills, tinged a bluish white, save where the limestone is covered with patches of ilex or other tree. Below these spreads the marshy plain, painted with stripes of soft colour melting one into the other, as on the Campagna near Rome. To the left stretches away the coast towards Gaeta and Naples, with big waves of limestone mountain rolling behind.

But something at our feet recalls us from the wooing distances. Fragments of ancient masonry are strewn on the plateau ; and a few steps below it we reach the chief treasure of Terracina—extensive ruins, including the arcades which we have spied from below. The main arcade facing the Marina consists of twelve great open arches, the whole façade reaching a length of more than sixty-two metres.<sup>1</sup> They are about six and a half metres high and three metres wide. They communicate one with another by vaulted gates in such a way as to constitute a great portico. Each section of this portico opens behind into a long vaulted structure of the same height. Shorter arcades of a similar structure look south-east and north-east. These arcades are plainly substructures of some ancient building, and their size and solidity are explained by the difficulties of erecting a massive building on a steep declivity.

What was the building which once rose above these substantial foundations and on so glorious a site ? The substructures had been visible for centuries to the many travellers who passed through Terracina. But down to seventeen years ago no one had known what they really were. Tradition named the ruined building the castle of

<sup>1</sup> These measurements are given by Blanchère.

Theodoric, the benefactor of Terracina. How vague men's ideas were on the subject is illustrated in what the few old travellers who deigned to notice them say about the ruins; one, for example, assigning them to an amphitheatre, another to a square theatre. But times have changed; the traveller has grown more prying; and the Italian excavator has been busy of late. In 1894 there were carried out important excavations of the ruins, in which our guide, Cav. Capponi, took a prominent part, resulting in the discovery of the *cella* of an ancient temple. The floor of the temple now stands exposed, consisting of a pavement of mosaic in white limestone with a border of tessellated work in dark slate. Among other things found on the floor were a number of toy-like leaden imitations of domestic objects—bits of furniture such as tables and chairs, together with plates and other utensils for the table and the kitchen. They are now to be seen in the Museo Nazionale at Rome and in the local museum. A yet more important relic, as throwing historic light on the temple, consists of two inscriptions to Venus.

These discoveries obviously gave the *coup de grâce* to the pious legend of Theodoric's castle. In his official account of the excavations, Signor Borsari points out that the style of masonry used in the construction (*opus incertum*) excludes the supposition that it was erected in barbaric times. He identifies the building with the famous temple of "Jupiter Anxur" well known to Latin writers. Virgil, when speaking of the Rutulian hills and Circe's Mount, adds: "over whose fields presides Jupiter of Anxur."<sup>1</sup> In so doing Borsari has the support

<sup>1</sup> "Qui . . . Rutulosque exercent vomere colles,  
Circaumque jugum; queis Juppiter Anxurus arvis  
Præsidet, et viridi gaudens Feronia luco."

*Aen.* vii, 798–800.

of more than one earlier writer: more particularly Domenico Cantatore, who, in his *De Historiâ Terracinae* (1706), says that the ancient temple ought to stand on the apex of Monte S. Angelo, and the writer of the article "Tarracina" in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, who thinks it likely that the temple was situated in the highest part of the city, very probably in the ancient citadel, where remains of its walls and substructures are still extant. According to Borsari, the little leaden playthings were dedicated to the youthful Jupiter. He would get over the difficulty of the inscriptions to Venus by supposing that, as in some other known cases, the temple was dedicated to more than one deity. Against this view certain German archæologists contend that the inscriptions point unmistakably to a temple of Venus; that the toy utensils are not presents to a boy Jupiter, but votive offerings to Venus, which, as we know, were brought by girls before their nuptials; and that the structure has nothing to do with Jupiter or with the much-quoted passage from Virgil.

To the outsider the dispute is interesting as illustrating how ruthlessly modern German criticism has attacked the venerable traditions of Italy. There is something pathetic in the brutal disfigurement of so pretty a conception as that of the abode of a beardless Jupiter Anxur; and one cannot but feel a certain sympathy with our archæological guide when he inveighs against these annihilating attacks of the Teuton, whose mind, he seems to think, is of the Mephistophelean type: "der Geist, der stets verneint." When we descend to the Marina and again look up at the arcades they seem to transform themselves into a kind of many-eyed sphinx, which winks down at us and challenges us to

read its secret. The fervour of our guide has succeeded in bringing us under the spell of Terracina's supreme fascination—a question which, if we were only properly-constituted practical tourists, we should no doubt instantly dismiss as quite meaningless.<sup>1</sup>

Terracina is inseparable from the Via Appia, “*regina viarum*”; and the visitor to the town has an excellent opportunity of studying the ancient structure. Turning first to the Roman side and extending our walk beyond the north-west gate already spoken of, we at once come upon a noteworthy erection, built of square blocks of stone without cement, and showing traces of a frieze with human figures, the whole topped by a second structure in *opus incertum*, possibly a relic of the ancient gateway. Presently we find ourselves upon a long, straight tract of the familiar Via Appia pavement, which is here still more fully exposed than the stretch beyond the tomb of Cecilia Metella outside Rome. The ancient road is so well preserved that vehicles can still pass over its pavement. The way is flanked by portions of a slightly raised causeway, on which stones, said to have been used for mounting, occur at regular intervals. Ruins of tombs are plentiful here as on the tract near Rome, growing thicker as we advance. Like the Roman, too, they are in various stages of disintegration: some reduced to mere stumps of conglomerate, others preserving more of their original form as well as their facing of stonework, which shows traces of an interesting design. As, too, in the portion of the road near

<sup>1</sup> What may be called the German official view is given in brief paragraphs in the *Jahrbuch des Kaiserl. deutschen Archæologischen Instituts* for 1894 and 1895. The question of the indwelling deity of the temple, as between Venus and Jupiter Anxur, is left open by Heinrich Nissen in his *Italienische Landeskunde*, 1902. Baedeker naturally adopts the official view.



Rome, we here find tombs crowned with mediæval erections, in one instance with a Christian chapel. Along these last three miles of the Via Appia before Terracina is reached, modern travellers used to pass on their way from Rome to Naples.<sup>1</sup>

If he cares to follow the ancient road farther Romewards, the visitor will find it an interesting problem to identify the sites made memorable in Horace's famous account of his journey south: the Forum Appii (Foro Appio), where he had to embark on a canal-barge "stuffed with sailors and surly landlords," and, worse, to face the mosquitoes; and, nearer Terracina, the Fountain of Feronia, where he afterwards breakfasted. This part of the Via Appia recalls other and more dignified scenes. It was to a spot near the Roman highway in the Pontine Marshes, between the Forum Appii and Terracina, that the Ostrogoth troops withdrew when, in the year 536, they revolted from their King Theodahad, and afterwards elected Witiges, raising him on a shield and saluting him as King of the Goths and the Romans.

On the Fondi side we can follow the Via Appia both along its primitive course over the hill, and along its later course close to the sea. We pick up the former near the plateau on which S. Francesco stands, and climb with it a little below the ancient wall which encloses the enigmatic temple. This portion of the Via Appia offers a striking contrast to that on the plain. The pavement is not exposed; and it is only the mutilated remains of the tombs along the road which tell us that we are on

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 15. I am indebted to Dr. T. Ashby for the information that the route taken was along the old Volscian road under the mountains up to the third mile from Terracina. After the improvement of the marshes by Pius VI (1775-9), traffic was renewed along the whole stretch of the Via Appia between Rome and Terracina.

the old Roman highway. But, if less impressive as a revelation of the past than the flat portion, it is much more picturesque. It no longer tires us with its rigid straightness, but winds about the mountain-side. It ascends between stony fields on which the olive plays its elusive game, its foliage baffling the eye of the stranger with its mutations of light and tint. It commands now and again gladdening prospects over sea and land. Higher up it takes a sharper turn to the right, and soon afterwards begins to slope downwards to the plain near the Lago di Fondi, where it is joined by the later road through the cutting. The walk is worth taking if only to get a more vivid impression of the saving effected by that bold piece of engineering below.

In retracing the later route of the Via Appia to the south of Terracina, you pass the cutting and follow the modern road towards Fondi, the ancient Fundi. It keeps for a little while close to the sea, offering a new view of whitish grey mountains, which warm a little into a pinkish colour as they recede. A picturesque object in the foreground of the landscape is an old tower, built to ward off the Saracens, on rocks which lave their feet in the sea, the whole scene reminding one somewhat of the famous bit of coast between Salerno and Amalfi. The road soon turns inland and winds along the base of the mountains towards the long and marshy Lago di Fondi. The ruins which skirt the modern road between Terracina and Fondi seem to indicate fairly well the course of the ancient Via Appia. It is by following this portion of the road that the visitor lights on the site of the ancient pass, Lautulae. The precise locality of this once famous defile is not quite certain. It seems to have extended some way along the present high road beyond Terracina, winding

about the foot of the mountains and terminating at the Passo di Portella to the north of the Lago di Fondi.<sup>1</sup> It was here that in ancient days the approach to Latium from Campania to the east was guarded, and now and again fiercely contested by Romans and their enemies.

On reaching the Lago the traveller passes the Torre dell' Epitaffio, the old frontier-gate between the papal and the Neapolitan domains, which to-day marks the boundary between the provinces of Rome and Caserta. It was no doubt to this point that a French traveller in the seventeenth century refers when he tells us that, on entering the gate giving access to the Neapolitan domain, the postboy (*procaccio*) cried "Viva il Papa!" and on issuing from it "Viva il Re!" More than one distinguished fugitive from Rome must have passed this way. The unfortunate Popes of the earlier unsettled days who fled from the capital could generally count on a safe shelter in some outlying portion of their dominions. Yet a later Pope had to take refuge in the Neapolitan territory. On traversing this road to-day one cannot fail to recall the undignified figure of Pio Nono, his pontifical rank effectually disguised, hurrying in the year 1848 to Gaeta, there to lie two years under the protection of his friend, King "Bomba."

If the visitor cares to follow the modern road beyond the Lago, he will still be able to trace the course of the Via Appia. At Fondi, as at Terracina, it passes through the town; and at Itri, some miles beyond Fondi, its substructures again appear. All this part of the old coach-road from Rome to Naples was, down to comparatively recent years, highly dangerous: brigands

<sup>1</sup> This is Blanchère's view. Other authorities, as Smith's *Dictionary*, appear to locate the Pass more narrowly in the Passo di Portella,

finding an excellent lair in the solitary mountains, which lie conveniently near the frontier. Itri, in particular, was famous for its brigands. It was here, the story goes, that the poet Tasso was captured by freebooters and, when taken before their chief, was received by him with the utmost courtesy and set free with a safe-conduct to regions less disturbed and more favourable to poetical contemplation. Milton passed this way in the next century, and may have heard the story of the brigand chief's consideration for his brother poet. Or did he first hear it later at Naples from the lips of the venerable Manso, Marquis of Villa, the patron and biographer of Tasso ?

Besides these excursions from Terracina along the course of the old Roman road, others invite the stranger mountain-wards. A short afternoon walk in the company of a good guide will take one to the remains of a village or villages belonging to the ancient town of Anxur. Some of these, lying on the lower western slopes of the mountain, may be reached in about an hour. They consist of a number of mural structures forming the vertical boundaries of terraces. They are built of big rectangular blocks of limestone, admirably fitted together without cement. Their whitish colour turns to a ferruginous red or brown towards the edges. These cyclopean walls resemble others on Monte Circeo, to be spoken of presently. Their original function was that of substructures to support buildings on the slopes. To-day they serve as supports for the peasants' terraced vineyards.

Other and longer excursions can be made on the western declivities of the Volscian hills. By using the railway the visitor may follow the route of some older travellers, and visit the abbey of Fossanuova (near the



station Sonnino), where Thomas Aquinas passed his last days. A longer railway journey and a climb will bring him to two other ancient Volscian towns, set high above the marshes, Norba (now Norma) and Cora (now Cori), both of which preserve considerable remains of ancient walls, while the latter is adorned with some fine fragments of Roman architecture. Another kind of charm belongs to the ruins of Ninfa, standing on the edge of the plain below Norma. It derives its name from the Roman days when it was a delightful resort, and possessed a temple dedicated to the nymphs. The present ruins represent a mediæval town, the greater part dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It managed to hold its ground for about four centuries, until, owing to the neglect of the marshes, it was stricken with malaria. The site is still an unhealthy one, and the master of the little railway station has, during the summer months, to sleep on higher ground. To one who has just visited Norma and other hill towns it looks as if it had accidentally slipped down from the safe retreat of the mountain. To-day it is just a battered shell of a place like Pompeii, monastery and church, palace and baronial castle, reduced to a picturesque ruin. Yet, pathetic as is its aspect, the deserted and crumbling town is not without its momentary revivals of glory when, in the evening, the low sun throws upon wall and tower a rich crimson glow.<sup>1</sup>

Of all the excursions from Terracina the most delightful is the drive or sail to Monte Circeo, the island-like promontory where, when it was an island, the early Greeks located the abode of the enchantress Circe. We preferred the road, facing the little discomforts of a

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting account of Ninfa, see G. Tomassetti, *La Campagna Romana*, Vol. II (1910).

rough cart and a small boy as driver. The road at first skirts the canal and its line of barges, passing through the low quarter of the town added by Pius VI. It then crosses the canal and runs near the coast, past the sites of the gleaming villas of the Imperial patricians. To our right lies an ample stretch of tilled ground where vines and fruit-trees flourish. After crossing the mouth of a second canal at Porto Badino, where another tower of defence against the Saracens is picturesquely balanced by one or two stone-pines, we find ourselves in a sort of primitive forest, a long tract of low dark cork trees lying within a belt of sandhills. The trees have a weird aspect, their stems gnarled and twisted, the bark, torn off in places, showing an inky tint. Dante must have had some such place in mind when (*Inferno*, cant. XIII) he described his infernal forest :

“ un bosco,  
Che da nessun sentiero era segnato.  
Non frondi verdi, ma di color fosco,  
Non rami schietti, ma nodosi e involti.”

The forest has its little clearings, each with its group of huts, and its donkeys and goats peacefully browsing. But the interesting inhabitants of this wooded region are the charcoal-burners, some of whom may be spied between the trees digging up roots and making big conical piles for their fires. As we pass out of the forest, the promontory of Circeo in front of us loses its soft blue indistinctness, disclosing its high limestone crags, its long jagged ridge, turreted with a signal-station, and, nestling at its base, its one surviving dwelling-place, the village of San Felice. As we approach the town the land about us grows again fruitful, and wild flowers riot up to the edge of our road.

San Felice is to-day a small and mouldy-looking place. Yet it was once a city of prowess, and it has had a history far-reaching and chequered like that of Terracina, whose might it once defied, and which even now it boldly confronts as if hurling its old challenge across the slumbering bay. Fragments of the ancient city, coeval with Anxur, are still to be seen, consisting of cyclopean walls built of huge blocks like those of the terrace-walls outside Terracina. These remains occur both in San Felice itself, in the citadel (*arx*) on the ridge above the town, and in a wall connecting city and citadel, which is a conspicuous object from the path zigzagging up to the Semaforo. Towards the end of the Republic, after Rome had subdued the territory, a new town, Circeii, sprang up near the other or north-west extremity of the promontory, and seems to have thrown out buildings over the whole of its length. Circeii was comparable with Antium in respect of its country-houses. The pre-Roman town at the other (south-east) end of the promontory continued to exist, and, long after the fashionable resort of the Romans had disappeared, survived as San Felice. In the Middle Ages it was a strongly fortified city, valiantly opposing not only Terracina, but Gaeta and Fondi, and holding steadfastly to the papal sovereignty. In the fourteenth century it passed into the hands of the powerful family of the Gaetani, who held it for four hundred years.

After an inspection of the old town, the visitor will do well, having ordered his lunch from a source discovered by his driver, to climb to the Semaforo. The ascent by the stony path may be unpleasantly hot in the late morning, but the effort will be generously rewarded. Cyclamens and other wild flowers, which find the warmest of nooks under the bluish limestone blocks, will

smile up at you. As you near the signal-station, the surly bark of a watchdog may for a moment be disconcerting, but you will presently find that the alarm has brought out a bevy of young Italian officials, who, if you permit them, will give you a warm welcome, and, perhaps, regale you with a bouquet of wild flowers. From the terrace you catch a cooler draft of air, and your eyes are refreshed with a far-reaching view. In front is spread the ample sea, from Anzio on the right to Terracina on the left—one broad smile in the sunlight. The jagged promontory shows all its pinnacle-like eminences, and beyond it are seen gleaming, near the shore, the blue waters of Lago di Paola, close to which lies the traditional fishpond of Lucullus. Behind, inland, are spread the Pontine Marshes, looking anything but alarming in their bright and variegated tints. Glancing back we have the noble sweep of the Volscian hills, met by the curve of the shore at Terracina.

The excursion to Monte Circeo gives one a peep into the life of the nomad population which gathers in the plain below Terracina in November, returning to its mountain-homes in June, when the lowlands grow unwholesome. They have their little clearings, to which they regularly return, labouring as swineherds, shepherds, woodmen, etc. Some of these nomad families come from the Neapolitan mountains and are employed by the municipality of Terracina, or by private owners of the land, in tilling the soil. They make a picturesque feature on the rude tracks, over which pass their carts drawn by mules, oxen, and buffaloes, as well as horses. In boats (*sandali*), drawn along the canals by donkeys or by boatmen, they bring from the lowlands corn, maize, straw, and forage. Their mode of life is poor enough, and they find their night's shelter in the straw



huts, where, like the poorest of the Irish peasants, they make companions of their pigs. Of late years attempts have been made to meet cases of malarial sickness ; and not far from San Felice one sees trim brightly painted buildings which are said to be hospitals for the afflicted peasants.

It is this influx of needy mountaineers which enables the Terracinese to don the air of indolent well-to-do folk. Not only does the alien peasant look after the lands of the citizens ; his womankind do the menial work for their houses. The native men, it is said, do hardly anything, and the women even less. It is after seeing these nomad underlings at work that one understands the low price of the wine in Terracina, and the rosy and plump appearance of the Terracinese women.

On Sunday this wandering population can be seen in Terracina itself, decked out in festal array. In the forenoon the pavement of the ancient forum is packed with men clothed in dark fustian, their legs girt high up the calf with leather straps fastened to sandals. Some wear short trousers, others a sheepskin apron slit down the middle. Inside the cathedral is another crowd of women and girls, the aliens easily distinguished from the citizens by their costume. Their most prominent feature is the kerchief laid flat on the head, as with the women from the Campagna whom one sees in Rome. Slight differences of form occur in the kerchiefs, some having a curtain-like appendage. They vary still more in colour—from black to white, and from blue to a cherry tint. The festal finery is completed by silky neckerchiefs, gaily tinted bodices, big gold-earrings, and necklaces of gold and coral. A sober basis for this ornamental construction is supplied by a dark petticoat which, in walking, swings heavily like that of the Dutch

peasant women. According to Blanchère there are fifty varieties of costume among these mountain women which betray to the connoisseur the home-country of the wearer. They make a pretty spectacle as they kneel on the floor, beyond a splash of sunshine thrown in by the broad open doorway.

## IX

### PALERMO

THE fates set Palermo in Sicily, giving it all the attractions and all the perils of the situation. They set it, moreover, at a point far west on the northern coast, where this trends to the north, and the peculiarity of the site has profoundly affected its history. The city lies on the gentle curve of a bay about three miles in length, which is flanked by two strikingly picturesque headlands, the bold cliffs of Monte Pellegrino to the north, and the group of sphinx-like forms ending in Capo Zafferano to the south. These headlands form the extremities of an almost unbroken semicircle of mountains which, with the line of coast, seems to give a shell-like form to the "Conca d'Oro," the stretch of low land which slopes very gently down to the sea. The climate is that of Sicily modified by the special conditions of site and surroundings, being less warm than the south coast, and comparatively fresh even in summer, yet, through its partial protection by the mountains and its ample exposure to the sun, escaping the extreme severity of winter at other places on the north coast.

The fertility of this Golden Plain is little if anything behind that of the rest of Sicily. The squares and gardens of the city have the luxuriant vegetation of the south. The palms alone are a prodigal joy; and as we look at them the quaint fancy takes us that the change of the city's name from Panormos (or Panhormos) to

Palermo may have been due to some imperfect impulse of "Volksetymologie" which wished to call it the City of the Palms. Then there are the pepper trees and others which give beauty to the streets and squares, and in the gardens beneath the dark pines all the floral brilliance of the sunny isle. Outside the city are the lemon groves, and the orchards where the Japanese medlars and other curious fruits abound; while on the declivities of the limestone mountains in the spring the fresh delicacy of the foliage and the pink and white blossoms of the fruit trees have their loveliness accentuated by the dark carrub trees which, like the Arab settlers in Sicily, came from Africa. Nearer the earth are the large and superb wild flowers, among others the crimson ranunculus (*Ranunculus orientalis*), of whose beauty the Arabian poets have sung.

The beauty of Palermo and its surroundings at once strikes the visitor. As he approaches it on the Naples steamboat in the early morning he will, perhaps, in spite of the chilling influence of the air, feel a thrill of joy as he watches the magic transformations effected by the low sun, the rich violet film on the mountains to the south-east, the glow of light on the greenish grey slopes and the ruddy cliffs of Monte Pellegrino, and the first responsive flush from the cupolas and towers of the city.<sup>1</sup>

The crescent of mountains seems in a peculiar manner to belong to the city and to make a part of its glory. As a Sicilian poet has it,

"Una cerchia di Monti erti ed arditi  
Ti cinge a guisa di celeste coro."

To see them well we need to climb to one of the

<sup>1</sup> I had this experience on my two visits, in February, 1904, and January, 1906.



flat housetops, where at the hour of sunset the figure of one of the old Arab inhabitants may be imagined mounting to repeat his prayer. One hardly knows which of the mountain forms is to be preferred, the long, low-looking Monte Pellegrino with its fortress-like projections and walls, the pair of finely tapering peaks of Monte Cuccio behind which the winter sun sets, or the strange and fanciful contours of the southern mountains from Gibilrossa to Capo Zafferano. They are always coming into view as one threads the main streets and piazzas of the city, looking near and sheltering like tutelary deities, and the eye is ever being drawn towards them by some marvellous atmospheric change of their colour—e.g. to the deep blue of mountain gentians in shade—or by some new revelation of their form, as the movement of the sun throws out their projections and darkens their hollows.

These half-encircling heights offer a wide choice of points of view for scanning the fair yellow-tinted city lying between the golden green of the Conca and the deep blue of the sea. Monte Pellegrino, the terrace of the convent Baida (where stood Baidhâ, the white village of the Arabs), and the Castellaccio above Monreale to the north and west, the Belvedere of Santa Maria di Gesù, the slopes of Monte Grifone, the Col of Gibilrossa, and Monte Catalfano above the ruins of the Roman city Soluntum to the south—these and other points invite the stranger to linger in dreamy contemplation of the city.

To one who rests and muses at one of these points the idea occurs irresistibly that so fair a spot was destined to become one of the chosen abodes of men; and in truth it early drew to itself the eyes of the world's rovers. It may be worth while, before inspecting the

city of to-day, to run the eye over the pages of its story, so as to revive our impression of the chequered experiences which it underwent in the hands of its diverse possessors. Its history, though bound up with that of Sicily as a whole, can to some extent be traced separately.

In the period of the Greek ascendancy in the south and east of the island, the northern city, though it received a Greek name, managed to maintain its independence against the aggression of the Hellenic colonies, being one of the Phœnician cities which divided with the Greeks and others the maritime power in the Mediterranean. Its name, the Ever-open Haven, or Haven for All, seems to point to its natural advantages—unless it alludes to the existence of a certain cosmopolitan hospitality even in that age. The irruption of the Carthaginians and their struggle with the Greeks was a calamity for the island; but Palermo, as one of the Phœnician cities of the West protected by Carthage, escaped the destruction meted out to other famous cities. In the struggle between Rome and Carthage which brought the Romans into Sicily (third century B.C.), Palermo became an object of their strife. As in the case of our own island, the Roman conquest led to only a superficial Latinisation of Sicily. It suffered from neglect and from excessive taxation, though Palermo enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, and its name is quoted with respect by Cicero and others. The negligent rule of the later Roman emperors was followed by the less firm tenure of the Eastern Empire, under which the island fell an easy prey to the Vandals, and later to the Goths (fifth and sixth centuries). It fared yet worse during the three centuries of Byzantine government (sixth to ninth centuries), when it suffered heavy

penalties for its attachment to the Western Church. When the Saracens from Africa began to make their raids in the island, Palermo was again attacked and captured after a year's investment, which is said to have reduced its population from 7000 to 3000 (A.D. 831).

The triumph of the Mussulman was a gain for Palermo, which now became the capital of the island, and grew into a splendid city and an important centre of culture. A well-known Arab traveller from Bagdad, who visited the city in the middle of the tenth century, extols its "old" and its "new" city, its handsome streets, and its five hundred mosques. The conquerors were wisely tolerant in their rule, and allowed the churches of the Nazarene to flourish side by side with their mosques.

The Norman conquest of the eleventh century marks a pregnant moment in the history of Sicily. The two brothers, Robert Guiscard and Count Roger, displayed a curious mixture of Christian zeal and worldly cunning in first offering their services to the Byzantine general sent to recapture the island, and afterwards resolving to keep it in their own hands. The resolve was confirmed when they first looked down on Palermo—not improbably from the Col of Gibilrossa.

The narrative of their conquest of Sicily reads like a chapter of some half-mythical story. The subjugation of the Saracen capital was, however, by no means easy. The brothers tried it once and failed in 1064; and it was not until eight years later, and after a siege of some months, that they captured it.<sup>1</sup> Happily the victors proved themselves to be wise enough, in taking over the fair prize from the Arabs, to take over also their large toleration. The ancient Panormos now

<sup>1</sup> F. Chalandon, *Histoire de la Domination Normande en Italie et en Sicile*, I, pp. 240 ff.

bloomed into a new and richer beauty. The culture of the infidel and of the Christian met and half-coalesced, begetting a new European style of learning, of courtly manners, and of art. The city grew in amplitude and in splendour. The Via Marmorea, leading from the old castle, was extended towards the sea, and other spacious umbrageous streets were added. The castle, Quas'r or Kasr, was rebuilt in an ornamental style. New churches were erected, and the metropolis was girt about with a circle of palaces and gardens, looking, as another Arab writer has it, like a gold chain round the throat of a beautiful girl. The Mussulman was able to boast that the Christian ladies of Palermo were donning the fashion of dress of his own women. He himself was not only received into the Norman court circle, but was given high office. To the Arabs were added prelates, scholars, artists and others from the East and from the West, including natives from our own Norman-ruled island. The population became a cosmopolitan one. Side by side, their laws and their religions equally tolerated, dwelt Arabs, Greeks, Frenchmen, Sicilians from all parts of the island, Italians from subjected provinces on the continent, together with Pisans, Genoese, and Venetians who came for purposes of trade.

The rule of the Suabian dynasty, the Hohenstaufens (1198-1266), dimmed the lustre of the Norman days by making an end of a separate monarchy in Sicily. The emperors had too many other dominions to be able to bestow good government on the island. Yet Frederick II left the impress of his powerful and highly gifted personality on the capital. The story of his careful upbringing in the cultured atmosphere of Palermo adds one of the romantic touches to its history; and his services to the whole of Italy, in making the court at Palermo,



not only the resort of the learned, but the nursery of a polished Italian language, have been warmly acknowledged by the historian. When, after the cruel death of the young Conradin (1268), Sicily passed under the rule of Charles of Anjou, Palermo and Sicily began to have their dark days. The former sank from the rank of a brilliant European capital to that of a provincial city. In place of its constitutional government, the island had to endure the worst form of a foreign tyranny. The people patiently bore their cruel hardships and yet more cruel insults, until in 1282 a new act of violence proved too much for their patience, and the pent-up hatred of the Palermitans burst forth in the fierce slaughter of the Vespers.

The expulsion of the French from the island led to a temporary restoration to Palermo of its rank as a royal capital. Yet, though the new dynasties—Aragon, Castilian and the rest—to whose hands the fates now committed the island, gave it a flag and a fleet of its own, they brought it but little substantial and enduring good. Palermo soon had to put up with a viceroy in place of a resident sovereign. The din of contending factions was never long absent from its streets. In those days of violence much of the beauty of old Palermo disappeared; among other treasures, the Via Marmorea, which was stripped of its marbles for purposes of defence. In the early days of the fifteenth century public and private buildings lay in ruins; and the sea, conspiring with the city's human destroyers, sulkily withdrew to a lower level, leaving behind it unwholesome swamps. The rule of the Emperor-King, Charles V (1515–1554), was an opening in Sicily's cloudy sky, and it retouched Palermo with something of its former glamour. Yet the enthusiasm of the citizens for their

great Imperial ruler was cooled by the misgovernment of his successors. The same fatuous modes of misrule continued in the seventeenth century, and once more excited the Palermitans to revolt. Yet in spite of these evils, the city—which had now lost its two famous rivers by a diversion of their waters, and much of its ancient wall—advanced rapidly both in population and in architectural dignity. The Via Macqueda was cut at right angles to the old Via Marmorea, which was now extended seawards and named Via Toledo (now the Corso); and many handsome buildings were erected. These changes gave to Palermo much of the aspect which it wears to-day. During the eighteenth century the island passed from one foreign ruler to another; and, although Europe attempted in the Treaty of Utrecht to secure for it monarchical independence, it was finally united to Naples and placed under the Bourbon, to be governed by his Viceroy. Towards the end of the century the island suffered from iniquitous exactions and the horrors of famine, while at Palermo municipal liberties were curtailed and arbitrary attacks made on the rights of Parliament.

The march of Napoleon's army towards Naples, by forcing Ferdinand and his Austrian Queen to take refuge in Palermo (1798), restored a resident sovereign and the splendour of a Court. Yet what impressed the citizens more was the spectacle of the Queen's rapacities and worse cruelties—evils to which the King's almost imbecile inactivity contributed. Indeed, the tableaux and other gaieties, in which the Queen's protégée, Lady Hamilton, and her infatuated admiral assisted, must have seemed to their eyes to wear a bitterly ironical aspect in so sinister and cruel a setting. To the English reader it is a relief to turn to the doings in Palermo,

some years later, of another of his countrymen, Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, who, as British protector of the island, firmly resisted the imperious will of Maria Carolina and granted the people a Constitution. The period after the fall of Napoleon brings the English reader to more familiar ground: to the restoration of the Bourbon to the throne of Naples and Sicily, to the gradual accumulation of his misdeeds, but also to that series of uprisings, in 1820, 1836, 1848, by which Sicily strove to tear off her shackles.

As a last chapter in the story of Palermo the narrative of these years records some of its sharpest pangs. Yet it tells of pangs borne more and more hopefully as, in spite of dire cloudings of the vision, the beautiful, benedictory form of Liberty is seen coming ever nearer.

The impression left by a perusal of the history of Sicily, as told by more than one native writer, is that of a harsh fate rarely relieved by the sunshine of prosperity. Her pathetic story resembles that of some beautiful woman set in a courtly atmosphere of unrest and intrigue, beset with masterful admirers, forced to accept now one, now another, each successful wooer, as possession is secured, treating her with indifference if not with positive injury. No doubt the successful wooers would have something to say on their side, of extravagant tastes in the matter of pomps and shows, of a quarrelsome temper and a fondness for violent scenes, and of the special difficulties of managing a lady who is not merely explosive, but inclined to pose as a *femme incomprise*. Yet the impartial reader will not hesitate to call Sicily, so highly favoured by nature, singularly unfortunate in her political lot. It may be added that the Palermitans have shown a recognition of their gloomy destiny in the quaint statue of the old

man or genius of Palermo, three examples of which can still be found in the city. A nude figure bearing a crown, and holding to his breast the head of a huge serpent which has coiled itself about him, is explained by the motto : “ Panormus, conca aurea, suos devorat, alienos nutrit.”

In its misgovernment by absentees, in its backward agricultural condition and poverty, and in the emigration to which these things have driven the people, as also in the possession of a temper which lends colour to the charge of ungovernableness, the history of Sicily seems curiously to resemble that of another island much nearer home.

Yet the pathetic history is relieved by more than one bright and smiling passage. Sicily, led by Palermo, has bravely maintained through the dark hours of oppression a spirit of hopefulness ; and again and again in the more peaceful intervals it has set itself to repair its damages and to restore its beauty. If less beautiful in itself and in its surroundings than in the days of the Normans, it may still claim to be one of the earth's fair cities. Destruction, during the centuries of strife and violence, has no doubt robbed it of many a proud monument of its glorious days. The stranger who explores the streets and squares, will fail to find any considerable remains of the Roman occupation—though a few miles from the city, on picturesque slopes high above the sea, he will find the extensive Roman ruins of Soluntum. Nor will he in Palermo discover any distinct traces of the Byzantine or even of the Arabian dominion. The corroding action of air and weather on the yellow tufa is said to have aided the violence of man in this wholesale annihilation of ancient buildings.



In spite of these losses, Palermo may boast of an architectural treasure in the buildings which still survive from the Arabo-Norman epoch. From the Cappella Palatina, from the cathedral of Monreale (with which that of Cefalù should be taken), from the cathedral of Palermo, and from a number of its smaller churches, one may carry away some idea of the former magnificence of the capital. The secular buildings, too, the châteaux, or country palaces, help us to glimpse the splendour of Palermo under the Normans.

An Englishman who visits Palermo after hearing of its Norman architecture may easily be disappointed. The first glance at the church of S. Giovanni degli Eremiti, or S. Cataldo, with its plain, rather gaunt, rectangular walls and its flat roof capped with a bunch of little elevated cupolas, will show to an intelligent observer that we have to do here with something widely different from our own Norman structures. A first view of the interior of the Cappella or one of the cathedrals makes this difference still more apparent. A small amount of knowledge will enable one to see that these Palermo buildings reflect the conditions of the epoch which produced them, that they have been constructed by a mixture of elements contributed by different races and architectural styles.

We need not enter into a full technical analysis of these composite structures, after the manner of Zimmermann and others. It will suffice to point out some of the more salient and interesting of their characteristics. At the outset it is clear that the term "Arabo-Norman," used by Sicilian writers, is an inadequate description of the type. This is seen in the fact that the general plan of these churches is derived from the old Roman basilica type of church and the Byzantine form with its circular



S. GIOVANNI DEGLI EREMITI, PALERMO.



arrangement about a central dome—two forms which were pre-existent and traditional in Sicily. Some of them follow the basilica form, for example, the cathedrals of Palermo, Monreale, and Cefalù; others, the Byzantine, as the Martorana and the contiguous S. Cataldo; others again, as the Cappella, have a composite design, in which the basilica is represented by the long nave, and the central Byzantine system by the Eastern portion.

Yet the art of Rome and of Constantinople has here been profoundly modified by Saracenic influences. This is at once apparent both in the exterior and in the interior of the buildings. It has been said that the little church, the Eremiti, as seen from its ruined cloister, would not, save for its tower, look out of place as a mosque in the streets of Delhi or Cairo. Still clearer is this co-operation of Saracenic art in the interiors. The first thing which strikes the eye in the Cappella is the glow of rich colouring, from the comparatively bright tints of the marble mosaics on the lower part of the walls, the pulpit, etc., down to the deeper colouring of the glass mosaics on gold ground which cover the upper surfaces of wall, cupola, and arch. These are in the main Byzantine work, the better part of them in the Eastern portion having pretty certainly been executed by Greek artists. Next to these, though scarcely less potent as giving physiognomy and character to the church, is the pointed arch, which is patently unlike our Gothic arch, the difference having been rendered precise by accurate measurements. It is gently ("dolcemente") pointed, and tends to assume—e.g. in the triumphal arch at the end of the nave—a horse-shoe form. This arch, which is found in the mosques of Cairo, is common in the churches and cloisters of Palermo, and at once differentiates them from



our Romanesque Norman churches. Other features of the interior coming under the head of Saracenic art are the peculiar pendentives in stalactite or honeycomb work, similar to those of the Alhambra, which are found not only in the Cappella but in the château La Zisa and elsewhere; also some of the designs in the marble mosaics, including the friezes, and of course the Arabic inscriptions. The niches below the cupola, which effect a transition from the square to the circular form, are also supposed to be of Saracenic origin.

The exterior of these churches shows a curious juxtaposition of styles. The long blind windows pierced by quite small windows on the walls of S. Cataldo, as well as on those of the palaces, are said to be a Byzantine feature, modified by the Saracenic arch. The mouldings of the portals and windows of the cathedrals exhibit Saracenic and Norman motives in close company; and a like combination of motives is to be found in the capitals of the cloister of Monreale. The Norman contribution includes, too, the brace of towers at the west end of the cathedrals of Monreale and Cefalù. To how great an extent the Norman contributions have been kept in abeyance in this architecture may be learned by a glance at other buildings in Palermo itself. The churches S. Giovanni dei Lebbrosi (built in the eleventh century), the Magione, and the Santo Spirito show more distinct Norman features; such as the low thick columns and the intersecting semicircular arches in the arcades about the exterior of the apse.

It would thus seem that the principal part taken by the Normans in the production of this architecture was to select, combine, and organise into a new unity certain features and tendencies discoverable in the architecture of other peoples. Their work in art is thus somewhat

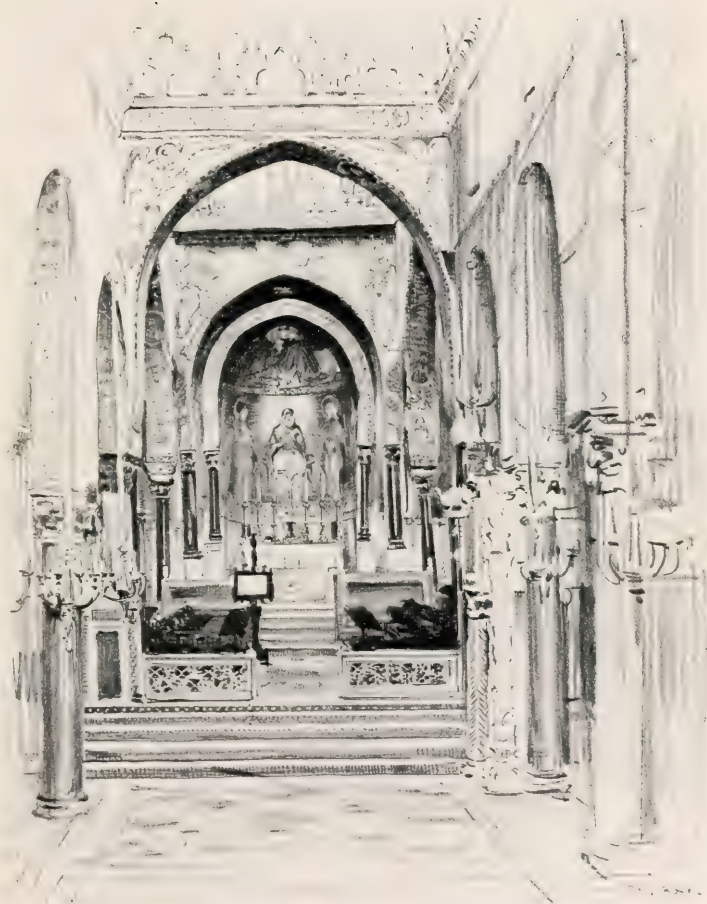
similar to that of the modern Japanese in politics, and the assimilation in each case is more than imitation; it involves a certain amount of constructive originality.

Yet it is possible to overestimate even this modest contribution of the King and his Norman advisers. The Arabs, as they moved westwards, were accustomed to modify the style of their buildings in the direction of that prevalent in the particular country in which they settled. Their buildings in countries where Byzantine art prevailed became more Byzantine. It is therefore highly probable that the mosques and other buildings erected by the Arabs in Palermo before the Normans came showed the influence of Byzantine art, and that the Mussulman builders whom King Roger and, later, King William employed were already in a measure skilled in combining diverse styles.

Opinions will differ as to the æsthetic value of the result of this curious co-operation of workers and styles. The mind which insists on purity of style will find the mixture of styles in Palermo but little to its taste. There is no doubt that in pure Byzantine architecture mosaics were employed in closer organic unity with construction, and less as a mere ornamental appendage, than we find them to have been in parts of the Cappella and of the Monreale Cathedral. Nevertheless it is difficult to refuse to these churches the status of "intrinsically beautiful" things conceded by Fergusson and others.

The Englishman who has never gone farther east than Ravenna will find himself here in a new architectural world filled with glowing colour. He will feel something of this in the Martorana, portions of which, belonging to the church built by Roger's Greek Admiral, still wear the rich mosaic mantle with which his Greek artists draped

their walls. Yet the full fascination of this colouring can only be felt in the Cappella. If he lingers and analyses his impressions, he may be startled at discovering how far the intellectual element of form, in the scene before him, has fallen back, under the potent charm of the emotional element of colour. The forms of the arches and columns, and the figures of the mosaics themselves, grow blurred as the spell of the deep rich colouring gains in force. In the dimly lit nave and aisles more especially, walls, colonnades, and ceiling seem to diffuse through space their rich, dusky reds, greens, yellows and the rest; so that here colour, like music, grows into a real "ambiente," or atmosphere. The effect of this sombre colouring is enhanced by the comparatively bright marbles covering the lower surface of the walls and the floors, and still more by another contrast made by the sparse rays of sunlight which descend from the small windows high up in the cupola. As one sits and inhales the beauty, attention flits now and again from the richer chromatic portions of the scene to follow a flash of sunlight as it slowly moves, touching now an angel's face, now the Divine arm which sends a beam (along which a dove descends) down from heaven to the Virgin. As the eye grows used to the low scale of illumination, portions of the gold ground appear to become sunlit, an effect which is said to be due to the peculiar structure of the gold work. One feels that the Cappella is the chapel of a king, and of a half Oriental king. It is small, closed in and dusky—a place for solitary prayer. It contrasts in this way with the spacious, open interior of Monreale, where the colours of the mosaics and the ceiling get brightened, and a sense of elevation into the serene amplitude of heaven prompts, not to the humble attitude of silent



INTERIOR OF CAPPELLA PALATINA, PALERMO.





prayer, but to an expansion of spirit in touch with other spirits in exultant song.

The buildings of this period, greatly altered as many of them have since been, offer much that is interesting for æsthetic contemplation. The Cappella, the church and cloisters of Monreale, the little church of the Eremiti, with its ruined cloister garden embalmed in fragrant flowers, are names which will recall delightful mornings to one who has lingered in Palermo and fallen in love with its architecture. The cathedral, though much disfigured by the infamous Fuga—the same who clapped on the façade of S. M. Maggiore in Rome—still lures the eye by surviving traces of its noble form, and by the rich carvings which adorn its exterior; and even the old Quas'r preserves in one of its towers and one of its chambers impressive vestiges of the glory which the Normans gave it. The surviving châteaux too, La Zisa, La Cuba, La Favára, and the pearl of these villa buildings, the pavilion La Cubola, retain something of their old charm. Then there is the Bridge of the Admiral—another erection of Roger's Greek Admiral—which is still a fine specimen of the Saracen arcade, though the arches are partly filled up by the deposits of the river-bed.

It is, however, not merely by their architectural attractions, but also by the historic memories which they revive, that these buildings detain the visitor. The great pile of the Royal Palace has its history written on its walls. In its decorated halls there met and talked the brilliant courts which King Roger and the Emperor Frederick gathered about them. In its terrible dungeons the latter is said to have starved to death ladies of high lineage whose lords were suspected. After these illustrious days the building suffered from neglect, and became unfit for royal residence,

so that for four centuries the king or viceroy had to use the confiscated Palazzo Chiaramonte. The cathedral, again, is eloquent with echoes of Palermo's past. It fascinates an Englishman by the mystery which enwraps its builder, the English Archbishop of Palermo, Walter of the Mill, a name prettily Italianised into "Gualterio Offamilio," whose body lies in the crypt of the church in a worthy sarcophagus of white marble ornamented with bands of mosaic. But it is the great Frederick whose name is specially imprinted on this church. It was in front of it that his mother, Queen Constance of Hauteville, wife of the Emperor Henry VI, when she gave birth to a boy, fearing that the people would say it was not hers, had a tent pitched, the curtain of which was raised so that the women might come and see her. In the same cathedral Frederick, when still a boy, had a brilliant coronation; and it was in one of its chapels that his body, after a long, long journey, was laid to rest in its massive porphyry urn. Here other monarchs of the several dynasties have been honoured with a like pageant, including the Bourbons, who swore so lightly to maintain the rights of the people. Other churches, too, touch the reflective spectator by their chequered history: the Martorana which has also been cruelly maltreated by alterations, and which did duty as parliament house in the days following the Vespers; and the Magione, once a famous church, which shared with the mother church in some of the most splendid pageants of the city, now changed by grotesque alterations into a vulgar spectacle. The most harrowing associations, however, attach themselves to the church of Santo Spirito, a noble building though unfinished, near which the massacre of the Vespers began. If to-day we walk out to the ceme-

tery, in which it stands, from the picturesque Porta Agata, by the quiet road which passes between high-walled lemon groves and looks towards the beautiful mountains to the south, we may perhaps recall something of the happy holiday scene which, like the stillness before a thunderstorm, preceded the savage outburst. But the terrible massacre itself, with its ruthless extirpation of the French stock down to the suspected foetus, refuses to be recalled in a spot where not even a rude tumulus, such as may be found on a battlefield, aids the imagination.<sup>1</sup>

The buildings of later periods, though wanting in the fascination of these "Arabo-Norman" structures, have a certain character and interest of their own. The Gothic is as sparsely represented here as in other parts of Sicily and Italy; and what there is of it does not stand out clearly, being complicated in this city of mixed styles with survivals of the Norman or Romanesque. The façades of some of the churches, e.g. S. Francesco, S. Agostino, attract by their rose-windows and doors; while other churches and palaces possess valuable relics in windows or portals, such as the doorway of the convent and church of SS. Annunziata, now the Conservatory of Music, the windows of the "Casa Normanna," hidden away high up in one of the narrowest of the streets, and those of the two upper corridors of the Palazzo Chiaramonte. To this period also belong other survivals, such as the pretty cloister of S. Domenico.

Some of these buildings, too, have histories to tell. The old Palace of the Chiaramonte—later "Lo Steri,"

<sup>1</sup> The tradition that the column in the Piazza della Croce dei Vespri marks one of the spots in which the bodies of the massacred French were buried, is very doubtful.



and to-day the “*Tribunali*”—is especially rich in historical memories. One member of the Chiaramonte family, powerful feudal lords of the fourteenth century, was beheaded in front of his proudly reared mansion. Some years later a noble lady, Blanche of Navarre, fled from this royal residence in her night-dress to escape from the odious attentions of the aged Count of Modica, Cabrera; whose wooing, in its mixture of senile passion and political cunning, offers a theme to which only a George Meredith could do justice. In the long hall on the first floor of the palace, which still preserves something of its ancient splendour in its double series of Gothic windows and its elaborately painted wooden ceiling, the Emperor Charles V presided over the Sicilian Parliament. In 1600 the whole of the building was made over to the Holy Office, and became the scene of nameless cruelties. Among the later antiquarian researches in Palermo few are of deeper interest than the discovery by Dr. Pitre of *graffiti* scratched on the walls of the prisons here—records which attest the rank and gentle spirit of the prisoners. When the already weakened powers of the Inquisitors were finally destroyed by the Viceroy Caracciolo—a philosopher and a friend of d’Alembert—many gruesome things, such as iron cages containing human skeletons, were discovered.

Palermo has a number of pleasing examples of Renaissance art. In these also we may see how the Palermitan architect likes to blend the new with the old, Gothic motives continuing to be used along with Renaissance. Good examples of this style are the churches of S. Giorgio dei Genovesi and S. Maria della Catena. They seem in their pretty façades, and still more in their dainty interiors, to conserve something of the joyous smile of the hour of the new birth. There are

also impressive examples of the Renaissance spirit in some of the palaces, in the interesting court of the Aiutamicristo for example, and in the towers and windows of S. Abatelli.

Some of the historical associations of these Renaissance buildings gather about the figure of the great Emperor, Charles V. The western gate, Porta Nuova, was reconstructed to do honour to his entrance into the city on his return from Tunis, whither he had gone to punish Turkish marauders (1535). The Palace of Aiutamicristo boasts of having entertained him during his visit. Other associations have to do with the sea. The church of S. Maria della Catena, whose pretty vestibule, with its depressed circular arches and dainty columns, to-day smiles down on a crowd of sea-folk and custom-house officers, recalls in its name the days of Roger; when his allies the Pisans broke the chain that closed the harbour (the Cala of to-day), and smote the Mussulmans, devoting their spoils to the erection of a church. Another little church redolent of the sea is that of Piedigrotta, which though mean and neglected-looking has some pretty ornament on its front, and can boast of a curious sea trophy of the sixteenth century, a large eagle-shaped lantern which lit the admiral's ship in a famous expedition against Turkish pirates.

The seventeenth-century baroque churches need not detain us. They may be said to speak, and loudly, too, for themselves. Palermo, like Naples, has a profusion of this heavily ornate style of architecture. The great churches, S. Giuseppe, S. Salvatore, Casa Professa, S. Cita, with their cupolas, florid façades, and crowds of ingoing and outgoing worshippers, are apt to impose on the eye of the rambler through the city. The dazzling splendour of the interiors, the coloured marbles, the

precious stones, the luxuriant frescoes, the rich carvings, should be seen if only as an expression of one of the engaging qualities of the Palermitan, a love of lavish display; and even the colder visitor from the north, accustomed to more restraint in decoration, may find it hard to resist their fascination.

Of the historic events which lend interest if not dignity to this later architecture one of the most curious is the rapid rise and fall of one d'Alesi, the Masaniello of Sicily. His emergence into notoriety was owing to an uprising of the citizens of Palermo, goaded by famine and hunger, against a tyrannous government (1647). A serious riot broke out, and the bell of the old church of Sant' Antonio summoned parliament to call the citizens to arms. D'Alesi, who seems to have been a vulgar sort of person, combining with something of patriotism a boundless vanity, assumed the lead, donning the title and pomp of captain-general of the city. In the magnificent church of S. Giuseppe, skilfully chosen for the purpose, the viceregal authorities—the College of Inquisitors and the rest—gave audience to the new tribune of the people. Their flattery perfected the blindness of vanity. The leader's autocratic bearing and extravagant pomp soon sickened a crowd which wanted only to get its hunger stayed. Two inquisitors, choosing their moment, issued mounted from the Steri on to the Piazza Marina, one holding out a cross and shouting "This way for those who fight for the most holy crucifix and the King of Spain." The disenchanted people obeyed, and d'Alesi, seeing himself abandoned, fled for his life. Half-way down the steps leading from the Via Macqueda to the Piazza Nuova, the visitor will find an inscription on the side of a church which marks the spot where he was overtaken and beheaded.

The art of Palermo consists in its buildings. Of its sculpture and its paintings little requires to be said. In the former it is the family of sculptors, the Gagini, and especially Antonio, who gave to Palermo its claim to a place in the Cinque-Cento revival of the art. Examples of this work may be found in the cathedral and the church of S. Cita. It is much extolled by Sicilians, and it certainly has a kind of charm, even if some of its characteristics, such as the stiffness of the draperies and something of mannerism in the pose and the expression of the figures, are apt to check admiration. In this case, too, one must first learn to know and love the character of the people before attempting to enjoy their art. Even this preparation, however, is insufficient to win the spectator over to the heavy and bizarre sculptures of about the same date which adorn some of the public places, more particularly the figures encircling the fountain on the Piazza Pretoria. Among later works the statue of Charles V in the Piazza Bologni is noteworthy for the self-restraint of the artist; who, so far from indulging in the artificial mannerisms of his time, has made of his hero a lean and undignified figure, for all the world like a poor blind man feeling his way with a stick. The sculptured seasons, kings, and patron saints on the four little façades of the piazza Quattro Canti, though interesting, are lacking in the distinction of art.

Some of the most engaging of the indigenous sculpture in Palermo will be found among the works of Giacomo Serpotta (1655-1732). His ambitious statues of saints and abstract virtues have much more of the artificial and affected than those of the Gagini. But his less pretentious stucco decorations, those, for example, which cover the walls and vaulted ceiling of



the Oratorio S. Cita, are a joy to the unsophisticated mind which retains a love of childish sport. The half-tone of seriousness in the dainty relief-pictures of scenes from sacred history is wholly dissolved by the presence of the chubby sporting boy-angels ("putti"), which are prodigally scattered about in all manner of charming attitudes, turning the little place of prayer into a gladsome child's heaven.

Of the paintings in Palermo not from the easel of a foreign artist, it is enough to say that one or two of Pietro Novelli (1600-47) have, both in their composition and in their colouring, something of solid worth.

Yet a mere guide-bookish enumeration of its principal works of art very inadequately represents the charm of the Sicilian capital. Here, as in other Italian cities, the stranger who loves to ramble and explore will find much that guide-books ignore or treat with scant courtesy. Now his eye is drawn to the crest of some dark mediæval tower visible above the lower buildings, now to a picturesque bit of the old city wall, now to a portal decorated with some extravagant tree-like mouldings, now to a queer bit of cloister corridor degraded into a public passage.

The later architecture of the eighteenth century need not detain us. As we approach our own era, the interest of the buildings lies more and more in their suggestions, in the memories of the last stages of the struggle for liberty.

Of the Bourbons themselves there is little to remind us, their statues having been destroyed and their portraits scattered.<sup>1</sup> One spot, indeed, vividly recalls "the hateful Bourbon tyrants," the charming royal

<sup>1</sup> There are one or two portraits in the museum, but the only good paintings of them in Palermo belong to a private collection.

villa, La Favorita, lying under the western declivity of Monte Pellegrino. It was here that Ferdinand used to retire when he wished to cast aside the burden of rule and to indulge his love of the chase ; here, too, that his Queen would hatch her sinister intrigues. To-day the villa is a discarded royal 'favourite,' and the dainty Chinese, Pompeian and other paintings on the walls of its tiny chambers gladden only the eyes of the passing stranger. Worthier recollections are recalled by the gateways, streets, and squares, which chronicle the noble efforts of the revolutionists of the last century, the terrible reprisals which followed, and the coming of the deliverer. It is one chief delight of a sojourn in Palermo to retrace the steps of Garibaldi and his valiant Thousand from Miselmeri over the Col of Gibilrossa, where, as the inscription on the obelisk tells us, the hero, probably looking down on Palermo lying peacefully as in a cradle between the mountain sides, said to Bixio, " Nino, tomorrow in Palermo ;" thence by the long zigzag road down to the villages, and so over the Admiral's Bridge by the Porta di Termini to the little Piazza della Rivoluzione.<sup>1</sup> One would like to have seen the General sitting in his red shirt on the piazza, his hand full of flowers and oranges, while the Bourbon's bullets whisked by. He must have sat near the statue of the genius of Palermo, to which as to a tutelary saint the citizens were wont in olden time to attach their protests against misrule.

Palermo, as indeed Sicily as a whole, is tenacious of its past. Modern improvements have involved only a small amount of destruction of its old buildings. The

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account of the route which Garibaldi followed in approaching Palermo, see G. M. Trevelyan, *Garibaldi and the Thousand* (1909).

one new street within the wall-limits, Via Roma, is as yet but a beginning, and progresses with a slowness which, while it may provoke the irony of the local journal, is wholly satisfactory to the lover of antiquities. Moreover, the authorities have made a commendable effort to save valuable remains from destruction. If certain monuments—e.g. the famous château La Favàra, now the Castello di Mare Dolce—have suffered from neglect, yet many other precious relics, such as the Martorana and the château La Zisa, together with smaller things like the picturesque Porta di Mazara, have been carefully preserved *in situ*; while many examples of Arabic and mediæval Christian sculpture have been garnered into the museum, itself an ornamental relic of the past, comparable in the picturesqueness of its cloisters with the Museo Nazionale of Rome.

This reverence for a noble past is seen, too, in the systematic manner in which the municipal authorities have gone to work to recall the deeds of buried heroes by giving suitable names to streets and squares, and by writing inscriptions on memorable buildings. The latter compare well, both in their finely chosen language and in their noble imagery, with those of Rome and other Italian cities. To inscriptions are added the still more educative records of monuments and statues, which embrace all the prominent fighters in the great final struggle for liberty, from the Prince Castelnuovo, who bravely resisted the exactions of Ferdinand and Caroline, down to the heroes of 1860. Further evidence of this attitude of piety towards a worthy ancestry in the citizens of to-day is the research work carried on in Palermo during the last thirty odd years, and published by the *Società Siciliana per la Storia Patria*. These publications have been fittingly

supplemented by a number of popularly written sketches of Palermo's history for families and schools.

But the interest of Palermo for the lover of old things does not wholly lie in its admirable buildings and in its illustrious citizens. The historian of to-day is beginning to spare a page for a brief chronicle of the quiet and slowly changing life of the fameless and nameless crowd. In Palermo the current of the people's life has flowed on to our days fresh and uncontaminated, as in few other European cities. The everyday customs of the masses, their modes of toiling and resting, of social intercourse and of recreation, even their forms of speech and their beliefs, remain to-day very much as they were two hundred years ago; and a few steps will take the stranger out of the Corso or the Via Macqueda into the thickly populated quarters where these old habits of life can be observed. It is a world that has nothing repulsive: its air is kept pure by sea breezes, it is vigorously cleansed every Saturday, whilst its health reports are decidedly good. On the other hand, it attracts by more than one pleasing trait. Into every small piazza a fountain brings music and freshness. Withdrawn from the little thoroughfares are tiny courts and alleys, where the domestic linen set out on poles from the upper windows relieves the sombreness of the buildings. In some of these, which nestle within a fragment of the old wall, where the air seems warmer and life more prolific, may be seen children, cats, and chicken obliterating their differences in a common indulgence in sunny idleness. These backwaters in the stream of city-life have their own historical monuments, chief among which are the half-ruined water-towers ("castelletti d'acqua"), which are most numerous near the old wall. They are of an obelisk, rectangular, or



cylindrical form, and they are among the most charming of the remains of old Palermo, overgrown with maiden-hair and other plants, which are kept fresh and glistening by a generous leakage of the old masonry. They serve to store and to distribute the water of the city, and have been used since the time of the Arabs, who called them "Giarra." They recall the days when the Arab, who is said always to leave sparkling water in his tracks, filled the city with the laughter of fountains.

Old names cling tight, like the maidenhair, to these quarters. Some, as that of the little Piazza Garraffo, are Arabic, speaking of a past abundance of water. Others, as that of the Piazza Aragonese, tell of the motley colonies which once peopled the city. The old names die hard, the people clinging still, for example, to "Fiera Vecchia" in preference to the new name "Piazza della Rivoluzione."

A remarkable feature of this life of the masses is the survival of the old concentration of crafts and trades in particular streets, as seen in such names as copper-smiths (Calderai), silver-wares (Argenteria), sellers of wax babies for Christmastide (Bambinai). Similar traces of this old localisation of the crafts (maestranze) are to be met with in Rome, Florence, and other cities of Italy; but Palermo seems to have preserved a much fuller record; and, what is perhaps still more curious, these streets make a brave attempt to live up to their old reputation. The Via dell' Argenteria and the Via dei Calderai still ring with the blows of the smith's hammer, though the authorities have forced the noisier kinds of work to betake themselves outside the walls. Wax candles are still exhibited in the street of the candle-makers, leather goods in the street of the leather-belt makers (Cinturina), and so forth.

The life of these populous quarters is an ever-enter-taining spectacle. The little low shops, divided into two unequal parts for shopman and customer, and the various workshops, offer inviting bits of Rembrandt-*esque* chiaroscuro. The markets in certain piazzas and streets, as the Piazza Nuova and the Via Albergheria, are full of colour, movement, and sound. At the stalls the student of economics will find choice illustrations of the higgling of the market—here wondrously quiet in its language—over weird commodities such as mysterious portions of the internal economy of a calf, or some gelatinous substance coming under the head of “*frutta di mare*.”

The fountains in the market squares play a pretty part in their busy life. A small boy who assists at a stall will sometimes use a leisure moment by making a play-mate of the Cupid or the dolphin which adorns the fountain. It is a drinking-place for all. Drivers of carts piled up with many-coloured vegetables and fruits bring to it their parched mules and donkeys, giving them water to drink or sprinkling it on their legs. The bird's cage is brought hither, and its drinking-cup refilled from one of the tiny metal spouts. The large round cauliflowers, with their lovely bronze and gold tints, which, arranged in rows in the little carts, look like a bit of glorious frieze-work, are brought here, too, to be refreshed from the spout—the driver putting his hand across it and so sending what the *doucheur* calls a “broken jet” over the rich bloom.

Not the least agreeable feature of the street-life in Palermo is the tender care of animals. The poor draught horses are, to be sure, sometimes brutally beaten, especially by the omnibus drivers; but the owners of cattle seem to be considerate, and it is not uncommon

to see a young child beginning its care of the beasts by toddling across the street and feeding a small donkey with fragments of orange peel, which, by the way, is one of the picturesque commodities on the stalls of Palermo.

The cries of the street hawkers make a daily music in the city up to noon or later. When in the early morning they are crowded into a mellow choral mass of sound in some distant market-square, they become the sweetest of awakeners. In the suburbs they have more of the character of solo song. Dr. Pitrè estimates the number of commodities hawked in the city by distinctive cries as one hundred and fifty-two. They have been sung for a hundred years and more without any appreciable alteration. The motives are usually melancholy strains in the minor key, though joyous cries are not unknown. The tones are now short and staccato, now greatly prolonged. A cry heard every morning about nine o'clock in one suburb consisted of two short phrases, of which one was a drop of three notes from the minor third to the tonic, the first being specially stressed, and the last repeated in a long full tone. Its theme turned out to be nothing more heart-rending than eggs, by a poetical licence described as warm—"uova cavuli"—i.e. "caldi."

Next to the cries in the art of the Palermo streets come the little painted carts which every visitor falls in love with. They are built of oak, the body and shafts being raised well above the axle by wooden and metal supports. They vary in height and size according to the animal which is to draw them—e.g. the baby-looking Sardinian donkey or the stately mule. Three orders of specialists co-operate in making them: the builder or cartwright, the gilder who paints the yellow ground, etc., and the painter who depicts the scenes on

the four panels. The pictures, which used to be taken from Bible history, now illustrate for the most part the adventures of Tancred and other legends of chivalry drawn from Tasso, together with stories of the Normans—e.g. Roger destroying the Saracens. Less frequently they depict recent battle-scenes—e.g. from the Franco-German or the Boer war. The pictorial art is rude and mechanical in its uniformity. Yet the general effect of the colouring, aided by the darker crimson tints of the decoration of the animals, is delightful; even though, when the cart is seen piled with huge blocks of stone and bespattered with mud, its pictorial heroics are apt to excite a pathetic smile.

The child-like attachment to heroic tales shown in the carts is still more strikingly illustrated in some of the entertainments of the people. Of these one of the most curious is the recitation of stories in prose by a professional reciter, the *Contastorie*—to be distinguished from the *Cantastorie*, or singer of stories. Dr. Pitre tells us that there are still six or seven companies of these popular artists in Palermo. The recitations, which are delivered from memory, are given in certain fixed places: during the summer in the open air, and during the winter in shops or sheds. The visitor is fortunate who lights on one of these in the afternoon. The entrance to the shed is closed by a portière of sacking. If it chances to be drawn aside for a moment, he will get a glimpse of the interior, a low, dark room in which an elderly man stands and addresses a seated audience slowly and quietly, and with but little gesture. To the stranger the spectacle suggests the secret gathering of some proscribed religious sect. There is no hurry in these entertainments, which are frequented by dockmen and others in hours of leisure; and the speaker will now



and again sit down to rest himself, and perhaps offer a pinch of snuff to his audience. One soldo is the sum charged for admission to the performance, which lasts two hours. There is a touch of the child-like in the fondness here betrayed for oft-repeated stories, in the jealousy with which rigid exactitude in the repetition is insisted upon, and in the selection of the dark room for a more vivid imaginative enjoyment of the story.

As in other towns in the South, the most magnificent entertainments of the people are provided by the church festas. Palermo has had her full share of virgin saints, to be duly honoured by processions. In these last days the four patron saints sculptured on the walls of the Quattro Canti have been eclipsed by Santa Rosalia, who, however, is by no means a new-comer. Her story has a peculiar charm. She is among saints the mysterious lady sprung from a noble stock—perhaps even from Charlemagne—and represents the spirit of supreme self-effacement in her abandonment of the luxurious Norman court for the hermit's grotto. The fascination of mystery clings to her disappearance for several centuries, and to the miraculous discovery of her bones on Monte Pellegrino, just at the moment when the discovery was needed to stay the plague in the city. The descriptions of her annual festival by Italians and foreigners are marked by enthusiastic admiration; and the chapel on the beloved mountain, which holds a lovely marble figure of the saint, won a full and elaborate appreciation from the pen of Goethe. The viceroy, Caracciolo, in vain tried to reduce the number of days devoted to the festa; but time, mightier than rulers, is robbing the celebration of its old religious significance, reducing it, like our English fairs, to an

occasion for indulgence in a special brand of cakes and other holiday delights.

To the student of ethnology or of history Palermo offers much of interest in the diversity of racial types recognisable in the faces encountered in the tram and elsewhere: a feature that seems to be one more record of the clashings and minglings of races which have made its history. In the everyday language of speech and gesture, again, traces of the old are discoverable, as in the employment of the Greek sign of negation, a raising of the head, and in the salutation "Buon di!" instead of the modern "Buon giorno!" More subtle traces of the manners of a past age, when the Arab or the Spaniard was in possession, peep out in the common use of quiet gesture in place of speech, as when, answering a stranger's question; and in the formal courtesy which still distinguishes the cabmen of Palermo from their colleagues in Naples—the former having up to quite recent times been addressed as "Gentlemen" ("Gnori" i.e. "Signori"). The strong disposition of the Palermitan to compare himself favourably with the Neapolitan, which, as Patrick Brydone's delightful, gossipy book of travels shows, was also keen under the Bourbons, may well be an unconscious reminiscence of the enforced annexation of the island to the kingdom of Naples.

Slow as the change may be, the new is ever gaining on the old in Palermo. The tall chimneys of the brand-new factories dispute the upper air and sunshine with the mediæval towers and the later cupolas. The manners are changing too, and Palermo's clever weekly journal has recently been recording with half a sigh the rapid increase of luxurious habits during the last thirty years. The scene in the Via della Libertà, when in the winter at the preprandial hour the file of equipages in the

crowded Corsa seems to be chiefly engaged in stopping and starting again, tells of a new extension of wealth, no less plainly than of an ancient social function. The recent development, in the Park of the Favorita, of races and other sports by the Sporting Club of Palermo, points to the same advance along the common European path of material progress. Yet the old appears to cling to the skirts of these movements. The new villas in the Via della Libertà preserve in a pleasing way something of the characteristics of the old distinctive architecture. On this same handsome road, where in the spring afternoon the *beau monde* takes its air perfumed by the violet beds of the villas, we may observe in the morning humbler though not less interesting processions. These are the little painted carts moving slowly into the town, each bearing its eight or nine peasants, the men with heads and shoulders covered with dark grey shawls which, fitting close about the swarthy faces, give them a Moorish look. Moving still more slowly away from the town are the herds of cows with refractory calves sometimes fastened to their tails, and of omnivorous goats which deftly manage to get a nibble through the wire fencing at the bark of the young trees.

“What of her future?” we ask, as we close our guide-books and our histories, and prepare to say adieu to Palermo. A future she will certainly have, for she is no slumbering mediæval city dreaming of her past. She may become a winter resort for the weakly; but her climate, as Queen Carolina well knew, is uncertain, and may for four months, as in the winter of 1906-7, play terrible pranks with seekers after a generous sun. With the rest of Sicily, she has old and knotty problems to solve—of land improvement, of the staunching of the

efflux of her blood in the emigrant ship,<sup>1</sup> of the further improvement of her police system. Her people, even in these peaceful days, retain something of their old half-Irish fondness for a row, as the recent Sicilian championship of a fallen minister illustrates. Yet she will break through these and other obstacles and continue to make progress, and this not in material prosperity only. The excellence of her University, of her bookshops, and of her journals shows that Palermo is moving on in the modern stream of culture. It is noteworthy that in the same city in which about the year 1775 Brydone found the daughters of the well-to-do enjoying almost as much liberty as our own, and making affable and intelligent companions, there has recently been established an excellent girls' school, bearing the honoured English name of its founder, and organised on the model of our High Schools. It is possible that Palermo may set the fashion of a better way of educating girls for the whole of Italy.

With such possibilities in our mind we may leave fair Palermo with a ray of hope brightening our regret, sending back as a last greeting, not the soothing cry "Buon riposo!" which we should send to some *città morta*, but the rousing cry "Avanti!" even if we add in an undertone "Chi va piano va sano."

<sup>1</sup> The number of emigrants from Sicily in the year 1905 was 98,000. See Tina Whitaker, *Sicily and England*, p. 335.



## X

### VIAREGGIO

AN impatient tourist, travelling from Genoa to Pisa and Rome, is apt to murmur at the stoppages south of Spezia. He knows nothing of the names Sarzana, Viareggio, and the rest ; and his objection to the delay is strengthened by the observation that here the romance of the winding rocky coast south of Genoa gives place to a prosy belt of plain between sea and Apennine. Yet a moment's reflection should remind him that railway constructors can hardly be expected to arrange their stations solely with a view to the needs of sight-seers ; and a little inquiry will satisfy him that there are good reasons, historical if not industrial, why Italians should be permitted to alight at these unpromising looking towns. In the case of Viareggio a solid justification of the respect paid by the drivers even of express trains is found in the fact that it is not only a port of some consequence, harbouring about five hundred keels and possessing a dockyard and an arsenal, but the most frequented bathing-place on the Italian coast.

In a country where most towns show some relics of a hoary past Viareggio acquires a certain distinction from the circumstance of its modernity. It is the growth of a century only. This modernity is accentuated by its proximity to a number of old-world towns, including not only the famous mediæval cities of Lucca and Pisa to the east and south, but to the north the fortified

burghs of Avenza and Sarzana, and the remains of the ancient Etruscan city, Luna.

Yet, though Viareggio is largely a kind of mushroom growth it has had its modest history. The one old landmark of the place, the unattractive, dumpy, square tower, which catches the eye of the visitor as he crosses the canal bridge on his way from the railway station to the town, reminds him that centuries ago the port had its Torre or fortified tower. Tradition speaks boldly of such an erection existing as early as the tenth century. Yet the first definite information refers it to the twelfth century, when it belonged to the Republic of Lucca. Towards the end of that century a fierce contest seems to have been waged for its possession between Lucca and Pisa, Genoa sometimes assisting Lucca; during which time the place was captured and recaptured, and the Torre destroyed by the Pisans and rebuilt by the Lucchesi. The importance of the canal-port, to which this fierce contest points, was increased about the same time by a new road skirting the canal and named the Via Regia. The tower when rebuilt was called Viregio after the road; and so we get the present name Viareggio. Nothing certain is known of the little village which the tower protected, save that the land was unhealthy and uncultivated, and that the inhabitants were few and wretchedly poor.

The din of the war between Lucca and Pisa resounded during the following centuries. In the sixteenth century quieter days appear to have fallen upon the place. It was during this spell of comparative calm that the Lucchesi took down the tower, and built with its materials on an adjacent site the cumbrous erection which still stands, serving, like the great castello of

Volterra, and other old Italian fortifications, as a prison. By this time the port must have reached a respectable notoriety, if, as is said, the Emperor Charles V visited the place with fifty galleys. In the same century the expansion of the town is attested by the erection of the church of S. Pietro. In the following century further improvements were carried out: the port was enlarged and provided with one of its two existing basins as well as with a pier, and the garrison was strengthened to ward off the ravaging Turks.

In the seventeenth century, too, we read of serious efforts being made to clear the country of wild animals. The population continued to increase, and two new churches were added. From Evelyn's Diary we learn that before the middle of the century Viareggio possessed an obscure inn.

Nothing very exciting appears to have occurred in the history of Viareggio between the early part of the seventeenth century and the middle of the eighteenth. As late as 1733 the population numbered only three hundred and thirty souls. Then, in the year 1747, the town's progress took a sudden leap. The noble families of Lucca discovered its possibilities as a place where they could be "in villeggiatura"; and land was given them for the construction of palaces along the sandy shore. They began to flock here during the Lent season, not so much, however, to secure the Lenten fish prescribed for the devout, as to enjoy perfect liberty to indulge their passion for gambling. The peasants must have been startled by this irruption into their humble world by the *beau monde* with its eighteenth-century wigs, lace, perfumes, and the rest, and some of their remarks on the strange visitors might have been worth hearing. The invasion at once brought

about one improvement, the introduction of a system of sluices to drain the swampy flats and purify the malarious air. Duclos, the Secretary to the French Academy, who passed through it in the year 1767, found in Viareggio enough of this new "elegant" element to justify him in describing it as "a pretty village."

The little place came in for yet more flattering attention from the nobility after the changes introduced into Lucca by the French Revolution. Under the regime both of the Principality (1805) and of the Duchy (1817) it grew in favour with the grand world as a fashionable watering-place. It was at this time that some of the imposing palaces were erected, which still give to the town a touch of faded glory. In the year 1817 the ex-queen of Napoleon's Kingdom of Etruria, now Duchess of Lucca, came to Viareggio and entertained herself and possibly onlookers, too, by pretending to hold a little court, and to start a fleet of two tiny ships. She added more useful undertakings, erecting a villa in the Pineta to the south-east of Viareggio, furthering a scheme for enlarging the town, on which she bestowed the dignity of a *città*, and adding a second basin to the port. All this patronage naturally led to the place being talked about, among others by Mrs. Shelley, who in one of her letters obliquely hinted at its growing importance by observing that no one thought it possible to reside there. About the time that Mrs. Shelley visited it (1822) the Duchess was busy promoting the erection of bathing establishments on the sands, to which was presently added the first marine hospital in Italy. In the 'forties—the palmy days of the Duchy—the population reached the figure of 6000. It was at this time too that the Duke added to his mother's



villa, in the Pineta to the south-east of the town, the mausoleum, which remains the one beautiful piece of architecture in Viareggio.

To one doomed by that stern symbol of Fate, the doctor, to winter in the place, Viareggio and its neighbourhood may at first seem dejecting enough. The uniform flatness broken only by the sand-hills, the stiff regularity of the streets, continued in the roads, the canal, and smaller rhines at the back, weary the eye. Yet these depressing features have their good side. The recession of the Apennines, if it flattens the foreground, places the fine, serrated ridges just at the right level for the eye. It supplies too a spaciousness and movement of air, bringing a salubrious freshness, while still securing a certain shelter from the biting tramontana.

One natural feature of the place is of great consequence, both for its beauty and for its salubrity, the splendid pineta of stone-pines which runs on either side of the town for some miles, making a brace of long outstretched dark wings. With its lofty stems and its rich green plumes it forms a worthy advance-guard to the protective line of the mountains, combining with these in furnishing a particularly fine background to the town.

In Viareggio, as in other marine watering-places, the natives keep modestly in the back regions, while the front is appropriated to the visitors. This front is laid out spaciously and attractively, and makes a good show with its fine hotels, its wide belt of drive and promenade, its flower-beds and park-like plantations, and, on the edge of the sands, its serried row of prettily coloured wooden structures, consisting of bathing establishments, casinos, etc.

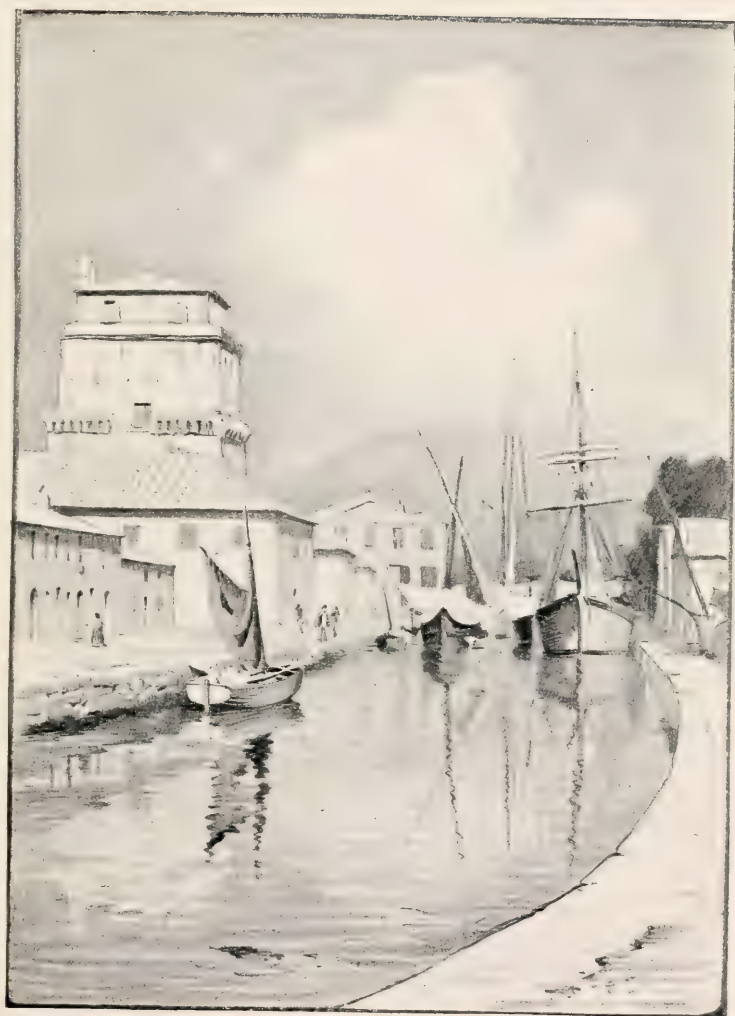
The Tyrrhenian sea has for a long time been retiring along this portion of the coast. It is a popular tradition among the natives that its waters once washed the base of the hills, some three miles behind Viareggio. From a more trustworthy source, a memorial stone, we learn that there has been a considerable fall of the sea-level since the middle of the eighteenth century. The name of one of the back streets, "Via della Costa," points to the same fact.

The life of the Viareggini goes on with surprisingly little noise. They are not a loud, self-advertising people. Even the children have quiet manners. In walking through the streets you rarely hear sounds of quarrelling or of scolding. In the very centres of strenuous work, such as the dockyard and the Molo, there is but little shouting. The cries of the early street-hawker are the most disturbing factor; yet these have their piercing quality softened by a genuinely musical element, and please the ear by their final glide down the scale. With this absence of harsh vocalisation there goes much grace of manner. One is often attracted by a little scene in which a woman hawker is illustrating the refinements of the art of making oneself agreeable to a possible purchaser. Something of the same charm of decorous quiet and of pleasing manners clings to the young people in their idle hours; and it is a delight to see with what dignity and grace the women carry themselves when they take their afternoon walk on the Molo in their loose clogs.

The lighter social intercourse of the Italians, which used to concentrate itself in the barber's shop, can now best be observed in the *farmacia* and the café. In Viareggio one may catch a glimpse of the ways of the common folk by frequenting a *drogheria* in the after-

noon hour when coffee is going. There you may chance on a sailor whose marine record can be read in his gait, and who may amuse you by his stories of visits to Southampton and other English ports, whose unpronounceable names lapse of memory has transformed into the most unrecognisable forms. You may hear, too, many a bit of good-natured chaffing, while sometimes you have a glimpse of the more serious side of the Italian. I shall not soon forget the face of a woman I once saw there, who had just been looking at the illustrations in a newspaper account of the funeral of De Amicis, the author beloved of the people. This was the funeral which English and American women rudely surrounded in order to get snapshots—disqualified, we may surmise, for a more respectful attitude by utter ignorance of the works of the Italian Dickens.

The most picturesque focus of Viareggio's activity is the Molo. It is a long pier paved with large slabs and makes an excellent promenade both for the Viareggini and the *forestieri*. When the sea is rough and big breakers tumble into the canal you must beware of a wetting. Looking back from the wooden platform at the pier-head, you will be struck by the quaint prettiness of the pier, with its row of light wooden structures, outside which are suspended over the sea curious shallow nets attached to a dish-cover sort of frame; while beyond these there gleams the red and white of the little "faro" (lighthouse). From the latter the eye is pleasantly led on to the compact series of parti-coloured bath erections on the left; and, farther inland, to the tangle of chimneys and masts—among which the heavy squat-tower strives to raise itself—marking the site of the old town; and, farther still, to the series of low horns to which the Apennines here



OLD TOWER AND THE CANAL, VIAREGGIO.





decline, as if weary of their giddy climbings northwards in the Carrara region.

There is always some amount of activity to be observed on the Molo, if only the monotonous and half-hypnotising spectacle of the lowering and raising of the nets, in which the little glittering fish appear too rarely to excite the onlooker's curiosity. The real, strenuous labour of fishing from the Molo can only be seen on a dark evening after the visitors' dinner hour. You may then find a line of men on one of the two piers fishing with a small shallow net fastened to the end of a long pole, alternately dipping and raising the net. A lantern is attached to the pole near the net end, and the lights, as they rise and fall, seem to be weaving a kind of firefly dance.

As a contrast to these soothing spectacles the Molo furnishes an exciting one in the departure and return of the fishing smacks. They come bravely down the canal aided by the seaward current, and sometimes, when the wind is favourable will even raise a half-unfurled sail. This is commonly of a buff colour and bears a design, a disc or cross of a darker terra-cotta hue. In the offing the fully outspread sail takes on the look of a pair of large wings. When the fisherman's heart is too eager complications are apt to arise before he is free of the Molo. An entanglement with another smack tries the Viareggine patience over much, and voices are forced up to a strident pitch. As in the case of other entanglements foolishly rushed into, a sort of judicial knife may have to be produced to liberate the entrapped sail. An amusing foil to these impressive processions of the smacks is supplied now and again by the departure of a dwarfish tug, which vainly seeks to acquire dignity by a series of overstrained puffings.

To make the harbour-mouth on returning when there is wind, is a matter of much skill. The skipper is lucky if he is able to sail up unaided. More frequently he has to resign his craft to the hands of the hawlers ; and sometimes when the smacks come in close together, he may even have to dispense with these humble coadjutors and to punt his vessel up the channel.

The canal grows into a glorious highway when, towards the sunset hour, a procession of boats passes up it, sails still unfurled, colours of hull and sail glowing, and the whole pageant imaging itself in the water, where its buffs and reds are softly met and half-embraced by the sky's blue. As farther on it begins to disappear among the roofs of the houses, it takes on yet more of the look of a stately procession carrying long drooping banners. The home-bound smacks display a richer variety of colour when they expose their Mediterranean fish, shining in their silver armour and painted with gorgeous greens, pinks, and blues.

The Molo is a serious place and preoccupied with business, contrasting with those reminders of summer gaiety and frivolity, the bathing establishments and casinos. Yet a wavelet of the gay, exotic life has been washed up to it in the shape of a tiny erection bearing the name of "studio artistico," and generously offering "ingresso libero." It displays a variety of painted knick-knacks, cards, sea-shells, etc. You will find the artist there most days, even on the quiet winter ones. It may be surmised that his soul is in his art, and that it feels bigger and freer when it is surrounded by its beloved handiwork. He may make a quick movement towards the door, a sort of spider-like, precautionary advance, if he sees a stranger approach. But his

Viareggine pride is above touting, and if you show no disposition to inspect his paintings he will merely redouble his own attentions to them.

On this large indigenous life of Viareggio there has of late years embroidered itself that of a certain number of winter visitors, both Italians and foreigners. They receive but little attention from the natives, doubtless because, after the summer influx of twenty thousand bathers, they are a negligible quantity. If noticed at all, they probably wear the out-of-season look of the closed bath establishments. They develop their own institutions, churches, tea-parties, etc., and appear to brighten the *longueurs* of the winter months by following the tradition of the Duchy and playing at "Society." The presence of some titled visitor, or it may be of some once much-discussed novelist, supplies the needed focus for social ambition or for rough-tongued gossip. Yet though excellent hotels are bidding for winter guests, and though the place has its climatic and other good points, it is hardly likely that the new artificial world of idlers will grow large enough to affect the prevailing simplicity and modesty of Viareggio's winter life.

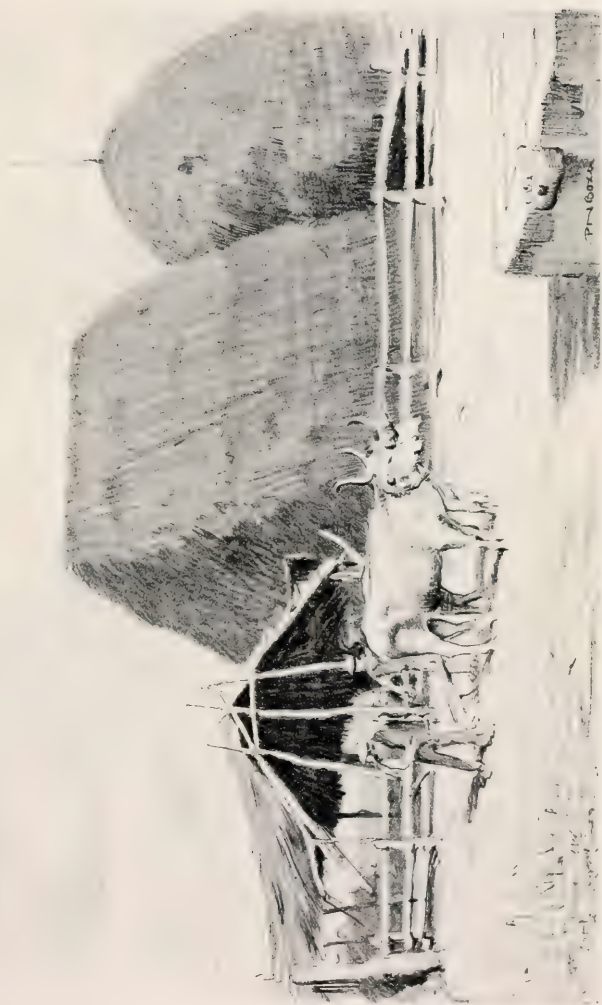
The most obvious way of getting out of the town is to walk along the sandy shore towards the north-west. The screen made by the larger bathing establishments soon gives place to open sands, which offer a fairly firm footway. But the bathing erections do not suddenly disappear: in place of the serried row of wooden structures we have a string of detached huts, some built of wood, others of poles and straw. The same "diminuendo" note reappears in the tendency of the crowded pines in the pineta, as they approach a clearing, to thin themselves out into a string of isolated trees. This bent of things towards "a dying fall" chimes in with the



tranquil spirit of Viareggio. Beyond the sand-hills we spy a small human colony, which, on a sunny day, is full of rich colouring, the brighter hues of the buildings, tufts of bamboo, and tamarisk finding an excellent contrast in the dark peaty tints of the straw huts which may be said to consist wholly of roof.

To the wanderer on these sands the beautiful Tyrrhenian sea lies fully exposed, and the dull monotonous roar of its breakers on the sand, marred by no hissing backwash of shingle, gives him a sense of a half-sad yet soothing companionship. The idler learns to find a quiet enjoyment in watching its ever-varying movements, and its changing hues; and in searching along its horizon for a fishing smack, or for the shoulder of a far-off island visible in rare conditions of air and light.

Inland, the eye will discover a large resting-place in the chain of mountains which appears above the green ridge of the pineta. As we get farther away from the town and nearer the Carrara region, the serrated ridge seems at once to ascend and to grow more distinct. From this nearer standpoint one can easily distinguish the winter snows from the white scars left by the marble quarriers. The mountains undergo yet more striking changes of aspect than the sea, even when no sudden alteration of weather transforms them. In the morning we catch the first signal of the coming sun on their peaks while their base is still veiled in mist, and we on the sands remain in cool shadow, as in a Swiss valley. The progressive hour transmutes alike their colour and their form. When the morning sunlight shoots obliquely athwart the chain their solid forms get sharply modelled—projections and hollows being clearly differentiated; while towards sunset they look almost



STRAW HUT, STACK, SHED, ETC., NEAR VIAREGGIO.



planed down to a flat surface. A fresh fall of snow, by delineating shelves and steep cliff-edges, will sometimes effect a similar accentuation of form. Clouds give to these "Apuan Alps," as to the Swiss ones, much of their glory. The mountains are near enough for us to trace the subtle effect of the formation and transformation of clouds, and of their movements as they creep about the steep sides, and to note how these movements serve to separate the prominences and hollows on their flanks. Less absorbing, though still interesting, are the changes in the beautiful low promontory in front of us, which runs out to the entrance of the Gulf of Spezia, gently ending with an island; beyond which, again, just visible, is the speck of a detached rock, seeming to our fancy to be appropriately named "Isola del Tino."

The hour of sunset seems to bring a yet more wondrous transfiguration to these mountains, as indeed to the whole scene of Viareggio and its surroundings. The sea now has its blue surface slashed with streaks of lemon, orange, and rose, while the wet sands add a second and deeper gamut of colour. In this general transfiguration the long, straight front loses all trace of sea-side commonplaceness; the villas, hotels, and bath erections being alike bathed in a glow of colour. Behind, the mountains are suffused with a rich purple bloom, which tends here and there towards a rosy hue, and against these stands out in fierce contrast the vivid green of the pineta. From a street in the town you may chance to get a small section of this widespread glory framed in between buildings which are already steeped in deep, cool shade: a rich colour-chord composed of the white snow of the peaks, the amethystine tones of the mountain slopes, and the gilded green of the pine-tops.



Though comparatively solitary, the sands contribute something to the native life of Viareggio. They are one chief playground of the "piccini." Italian children are not inventive of social games, but are skilful at solitary pastimes. I once met a boy wandering aimlessly among the sand-hills near the arsenal, and on approaching him unobserved saw that he bore in his arms a toy-ship consisting only of a mast and a sail. He seemed to be absorbed in the fascinating pastime of moving the little sail this way and that so that it might catch the gentle south-west wind. He was probably playing at being a ship. When banded together these "monelli" of the sands indulge in an amphibious life. Bare-legged and wearing only a thin shirt, they are as much in the shallow water as on dry land. They sometimes give a look of seriousness to their doings by pretending to imitate their elders in picking from the sea some of its abundant fruit—the small shell molluscs which are known as *frutta di mare*.

While quietude is the deeper and prevailing note of the place, Viareggio has moments of noisy and even furious explosion. The fierce *libeccio* has its best chance on this coast, and now and again hurls its utmost fury on harbour, sands, and town. It comes big with noise, striking both the bath erections and the houses with *coups de vent*. The houses lend themselves to its savage mood—doors, windows, and loose shutters responding by vigorous bangings and creakings; while even the glass of the windows, unfixed with putty, contributes a sharp crackling sound. Out of doors, clouds of sand are driven over the front into the streets, where they erect little cliffs, and worm their way under the doors into the houses. The roofs of the wooden buildings in the front are apt to give way under the

strain of the gale, and are flung upon the ground with a crash. The sea—or what is to be seen of it—is just one huge cauldron of dirty green and grey, its sinister aspect being intensified by the weird glare of the affrighted sun which falls upon it. The mountains seek to efface themselves under a pall of gloomy mist. The streets are deserted, only a brave girl now and then venturing out of doors with the head closely enveloped in a woollen shawl. In the harbour-canal the huge waves rush up on one another's heels, washing the abandoned pavement of the Molo with a long swishing sound of baffled fury. In the pineta the tall pines lean farther than usual away from the sea, looking like a panic-stricken crowd. As their branches push one against the other under the pressure of the wind, they cry out in painful creakings, adding another shrill note to the storm's chaos of sound.

A glance at the sands, after the storm has spent its rage, tells you the story of its passion. The tideless sea has been driven by the tempest far above its customary level and close to the sand-hills. In its wild upward rush it has made havoc of the topography of the surface, the terraces and hollows of yesterday having disappeared under a new system of levels.

The English visitor to Viareggio will not need the statue and the pretty inscription set up in the Piazza to carry his thoughts to Shelley. The shrill note of the *libeccio* bears a tragic meaning to one who recalls the blast which struck down the young life still full of poetic promise. To such an one, too, the sands towards the north-west of Viareggio will seem to be haunted with memories of the melancholy ceremony enacted in these solitudes, when the poet's friends cremated the disfigured body that had been washed up here. The

scene may image itself with a preternatural vividness when at sunset the Apuan Alps glow as though reflecting the flame of some great sepulchral pyre.

But if the storm brings a shock and something of a confusing agony into Viareggio, its departure constitutes a big joy. For visitor, as for native, it has effaced the sunny world and substituted ugliness for beauty, and its end means the restoration of this world. The sea resumes its lovely serenity. The mountains, which during the storm have frowned black, relapse into a smile. We may watch their beautiful forms as they recreate themselves out of a primal darkness. The poor folk, who have been shivering in their houses for days, return to their beloved sunny haunts. On the sands the fury of the sea has washed up treasure for the poor. The high-water mark is indicated by a belt of dark brown drift—sticks, reeds, bits of bamboo, chestnut-bur, and other refuse—while here and there lies a goodly piece of wood. Men and women, old and young, go forth to glean from the “barren sea.” Some bind the sticks they find into faggots and carry them on their head: others put their findings into deep baskets fastened to their backs. One seeker of treasure-trove makes a brave show with a donkey and cart, while another outdoes him with a heavy cart drawn by two oxen. On my offering to one of these beach-combers a piece of wood, his tanned and lined face brightened with a weird smile, which was followed by a “*Piacere!*” a “*Grazie!*” and finally an “*Addio!*” The offer of an apple to his boy assistant struck the latter into amazed silence, from which the old man delivered him by encouraging him to accept the gift. One would have liked to plumb the boy’s consciousness, and to know what childish ideas came to him about the rosy apple

charmed out of the sea. This is by no means the only instance I have come across of an unwillingness to accept gifts in Italian children, whom travellers have hastily regarded as uniformly trying to get something out of you.

Other treasure has been dragged from the sea-bottom by the storm, the small shell-fish, especially the "nicchioni," or long bivalves, which at Viareggio are also named "coltellacci." After a storm men and women come down in crowds to the sands and, wading in shallow water, dig out these shells with their hands. In fine weather they will wade out waist-deep and scrape the sandy bottom for the *coquillage*. The women are quaintly disguised in what looks like a thin linen dress and pantaloon, the head being protected by a shawl. Each carries a scraper ("rastello"), consisting of a semicircular frame with a net attached. The straight side of the frame is open and is armed with a metal scraper. The whole machine is fastened to three poles which meet at the top above the level of the fisherman's head. Grasping the poles, he moves backwards, tilting the little apparatus up and down so as to get the scraper well into the sand. In this way the shell-fish are carried by the current into the net. The little molluscs are said to be very appetising, and are often eaten with spaghetti in soup. At a distance the women are hardly distinguishable from the men, save when they skip merrily into the water or come out singing into the warm sunshine. The search for shell-fish is also carried on from a boat, a man standing up in the stern and working a long pole from side to side.

The sands give us the cheerful quietude of open spaces. If at Viareggio cloistered stillness is desired, one must turn one's steps to the pineta. As we enter



the grove we feel something of that sudden hush which all woods seem to exhale. Indeed, for a place close to a good-sized town, it is strangely noiseless. Even in February the birds only occasionally break its stillness with a twitter of song. Nor does the ear detect the lesser sounds of an English wood, those made by movements of the squirrel and other creatures. On the other hand, there is nothing of the eerie gloom of a thickly planted English wood. The tall thinnish stems, branchless almost up to their green canopy, give a sense of openness and of full daylight. Had we to liken it to a temple we should choose a lofty well-lit building like the cathedral of Monreale. It only suggests a Gothic church towards sundown; when, looking out from it seawards, one sees patches of red sky separated as in a Gothic window by the vertical mullions of the pine-stems.

The pineta offers the rambler a variety of walks. The most frequented one is the central avenue, where the pines have their form and colour set off by the grey tones and the twisted branches of the planes; which latter reflect their queer contortions in the shadow-pattern on the ground. The promenade is almost deserted on winter days, and the few persons who take the air here in the morning, such as a pair of hatless maidens or a nun leading her charge of little girls, move so quietly as hardly to disturb one's sense of solitude.

Like the town, the pineta has its gentle human activities. It grows almost noisy at moments, more especially in November when the big cones are gathered in. Men now come into the grove bearing long bamboo poles with a billhook attached to cut off the cones. Those highest can only be reached by climbing into the tree.

They have weight, and fall on the ground with a thud; and the younger men and girls below, whose work it is to rake them into heaps and to pack them into sacks, must now take care of their heads. The piles of fruit add to the odour of resin, which is rarely altogether lacking in the pineta. You will know the reason of this careful garnering of the cones some day when the padrone of your hotel supplies the dinner table with the delicious little roasted nuts.

All through the winter, when the weather permits, there is a desultory trickle of human labour in the pineta, such as the gathering of dead leaves and twigs by the poor. Yet these occupations scarcely break its stillness; for the children's voices, purged from all taint of shrillness by the wood's magical winnowing, seem rather to deepen the impression of quietude. Hardly more of noise comes with the lopping off of the dead branches, also effected by means of a long bamboo pole and billhook.

The one formidable disturber of the Pineta in the winter months is the sportsman (*cacciatore*), who may be met with, especially on a Sunday morning, setting out, bravely accoutred in knickerbockers and leggings, with gun and dog. His quarry consists of the few small birds which make the noiseless tenants of the wood. They are so small that you will see him, after he has shot one on the branch of a tree close to him, searching with his dog for a long while before he can find it. The crack of his gun sounds a sacrilege to our sacred grove, and seems to send a shiver of horror through the quiet-loving pines. After watching his intrusions we understand the scarcity of bird-song in this grove. It is hard not to be indignant at this pretence of "sport." But "sport" in other countries is not above the reach of

criticism, and we must not forget that the Italian eats small birds. That he cares more for securing them than for the practice of any skill in the pursuit of them is shown by the fact that in the neighbourhood of Viareggio he may be seen setting out with a gun and a caged decoy-bird.

The country behind Viareggio is flat and uninviting. Yet the high road will often furnish amusement to the stranger by its bizarre assemblage of vehicles and animals, illustrative of every imaginable combination of horse, ass, and mule, as well as by the language the peasants are wont to use to their brutes. He will find it a curious problem to determine the several shades of encouragement and protestation expressed by "Avanti!" "Via!" and their other less articulate cries. The little farms he passes will attract him by their bonny look in the sun, by the bunches of golden Indian corn suspended on their walls and by the brightly painted carts and picturesque straw huts scattered around. Here he will still see what Shelley saw in Tuscany, "those teams of beautiful white oxen . . . labouring the little vine-divided fields with their Virgilian ploughs and carts."

If, leaving the high road, you follow one of the paths skirting the rhines by which the plain is intersected, you may catch other glimpses of an old idyllic peasant-life. Nothing makes a prettier picture in Tuscany than a boy's gentle manner of tending his cattle. I have seen one near Viareggio throw his arms about the neck of a tiny Sardinian donkey. Once, when progress was blocked on one of these side-tracks by a flock of scraggy, long-legged sheep, the woman driving them sweetly apologised for their apparent unwillingness to get out of the way by saying: "They don't like the dirt." In February one may find on the sheltered rhine-banks

quite a wealth of wild flowers, some of our own early ones, as the violet and celandine, altered a little so as not to seem startlingly home-like.

The interesting roads near Viareggio are those leading to the mountains. One of the shortest is along the old Via Regia by the canal to Stiava, a village hidden in a hollow of the Apennines. It has a curious old circular tower built of large square blocks. You may be lucky enough when visiting the place to light on one of the glib Italian rhetoricians—born “ciceroni”—who will expatiate, with abundance of elegant gesture, on what “la storia” says about the tower as it was centuries ago when vessels sailed up to the foot of the mountains.

A walker who makes a prolonged stay at Viareggio will want to visit some of the little villages which, seen from the town, make white horizontal streaks on the mountain side a few hundred feet above the plain. He will easily discover some steep cobbled road leading up to a village through the olives and chestnuts, and may by good luck have his solitude pleasantly broken by the companionship of a handsome young peasant, full of life, and loving nothing better than an opportunity of pouring forth his knowledge into a receptive ear. It is a delight to hear the jolly young Bacchus roll out with full resonant voice his “Per Baccos!” and indulge his love of diminutives, as when he tells you that the place you are making for is “pochino,” or that the path is “buonina.”

One of the most interesting of the nearer excursions from Viareggio is to Camajore, hidden away in a long dent of the Apennines. A steam tram to the place meets the case of those for whom the walk is wearisome. It was once a fortified town, and still preserves a



gateway and bit of battlemented wall. A short distance from the town lies its chief treasure, a Lombard church, a relic of a once famous abbey of the eighth century.

Camajore is a centre for the culture of the olive and the fabrication of olive oil. One sees the sides of the mountains dotted with buildings in which the oil is crushed out of the berries. On wandering about these steeps in the autumn one may chance to light on a family busily employed in beating down the olives with long bamboo sticks. The work is hard, for the berries hold tenaciously to the twigs, and when they fall it is often to roll some distance down a steep declivity. On the lower slopes, beside the olive, thrives the orange. Climbing here one December morning and glancing back I saw a pretty scene. A woman near a cottage below me was standing under an orange tree and holding a baby high in her arms. The tree was all aglow with colour; and, as I watched, I saw her bring the child's face close to the golden balls and twist her body about to the right and to the left as if the better to fill its eyes with the glory. The action suggested some baptismal rite, by which the infant was to be initiated into the worship of Beauty. Did the old pagans, I wondered, begin in some such way as this to train their progeny in the worship of the goddess of fruits?

A longer excursion into these mountains is to Val di Castello. It makes a pleasant drive from Viareggio on a mild February day. At Pietra Santa the marble blocks strewn about and the studios of the "Scultori" tell us that we are in the region of the Carrara marble quarries. The castle in the Piazza Giosuè Carducci and the marble façade of the Duomo hard by—said to date from the thirteenth century—

hinting of a vanished mediæval world, make a restful background to the busy life of to-day. Beyond the town we enter a little valley shut in by olive-clad slopes and, passing the Romanesque church of San Giovanni, which has an interesting arcade on the exterior of its apse, soon reach our village, Val di Castello.

The little place winds through a narrow ravine along the bank of a mountain stream. The pleasant sound of flowing water is everywhere, in the stream itself, in the washing-troughs, and in the water-mills. Vines are pushing their shoots on the trellis-work which runs by the side of the stream, and oranges and lemons are ripening in the little gardens. Beyond the village there climbs a steep road, which soon dwindles to a cobbled mule-path. We pass here a factory in which girls are seen breaking with small hammers what looks like a kind of soft alabaster, said to be used in making dyes. This rocky chasm, down which a stream tumbles, is also rich in plant-life, wild-flowers, and ferns. Following it up a bit farther, we get a peep of the village reposing far below in its valley-cradle, open only to the sea-breezes.

In passing through the village, we had noticed a little house, now blackened by smoke, which bears an inscription telling us that Carducci was born here in the year 1835, and that his father was a doctor. As we now glance down on it from our height, the sequestered village seems an ideal spot for the boy poet. Here he may have first read his Horace, and imitated his hero's attempts to play the rustic in another secluded valley.

This drive takes us near that belt of flattish territory, running between the Tyrrhenian sea and the Apennines from Tuscany to the Genovese Riviera (Liguria), which has long been known as Lunigiana. Its name comes from

the ancient Etruscan city around the site of which the towns of Lunigiana sprang up. It includes the quarries of Carrara marble celebrated in ancient and modern times. Though but little known to the tourist, its picturesqueness and its romantic historical associations, aided by its industrial importance, give it a claim to be included among the visitable places of Italy, and from Viareggio it can be explored in a couple of days.

Following the order of historical development we begin with an excursion to the ruins of Luna. Alighting at the little station of Luni we walk seawards through a lane so narrow that it is difficult to pass a horse. It has a rudimentary hedge, in which in the month of March the speedwell and other flowers live their sheltered life, while beyond the hedges spread fields of corn, lupin, and vines. A few minutes bring us to the little *museo*, the *custode* of which, by the way, is not always to be found. The ruins stand on the plain just as this opens out widely from the valley through which the railway runs south-east of Spezia. They are a little more than a mile from the sea and sufficiently raised above it to command a glimpse of its serene blue. On the inland side they face the splendid sheaf of peaks of the Apuan Alps, magnificent still for all the wounds which ages of marble-quarrying have inflicted upon them. No vestiges of the Etruscan city are to be found, only a few ruins of Roman date. They stand quite unprotected in corn-fields, making a place of drowsy warmth for the lizards. The masonry consists of unhewn, thinnish slabs of grey stone, varied here and there with red brick. The most imposing of them is the shell of an amphitheatre, consisting of an outer and an inner wall, between which can be seen the remains of roofed chambers. The ancient remains have done their best

to hide their decay under heavy festoons of ivy, ferns, and bushes. The peasant has helped, by carrying his green corn and his blue flax-bloom up to the crumbling walls and even into the ground which they enclose.

The ancient Luna, like many a mountain, is made more beautiful by a veil of mist. Its very name is resonant of charm and mystery. In the Roman days it was, in truth, the white, moon-like city, with shining walls built of the glittering Carrara marble, which was then reckoned equal to the best Greek stone. Yet, of its earlier Etruscan days we know nothing. It seems to have flashed out like a veritable moon from behind a cloud of obscurity. A still greater mystery clings to its port—more famous even than the city itself. Authorities are agreed that this capacious haven, which the Romans used as a gathering-place for their fleets, is what we know as the Gulf of Spezia. But antiquarians can give us no answer to the question why this spacious bay, lying at least five miles from Luna, and shut off from it by a range of hills, came to bear its name. The city stood erect as late as the fifth century. In the middle ages it fell on evil days, having, it is said, been first badly damaged by the Arabs (1016); after which, in Dante's time, it began to sink into a process of gradual decay.

Yet, while the ancient city was decaying, the region of which it was nominally the capital was rising in importance. About the date of Dante's reference to it the communes of Lunigiana, from Sarzana to Massa, were vigorously alive and pushing their way into prominence, to play for a time a noteworthy part in the struggles of that turbulent age. Like Viareggio, they appear to have been a bone of contention between the powerful adjacent cities of Genoa, Lucca, and Pisa.



A special *éclat* is given to this chapter of Italy's history from the appearance on the scene of the startling figure of Castruccio Castracani, one of the most daring of the condottieri who leapt into the seat of the despot. He combined the winsome charm of a fearless and dashing soldier with the more sinister fascination of an unscrupulous intriguer, who was ready at once to make and to cast aside friends, and proved himself to be a cruel and revengeful conqueror. During his comparatively short life of forty-five years (1283-1328) this brilliant free-lance flitted like a dragon-fly from one spot to another. His first noteworthy triumphs were achieved as Ghibelline captain in Lunigiana, where he successively subdued Sarzana—or Luna Nova, as it was now called, from its having become the new capital of Lunigiana—Carrara, and other communes, which had hitherto been under the lordship of Lucca. To these he added fresh conquests, until he became, not only Lord of Lunigiana, but Duke of Lucca, as well as of Pistoia and Volterra.

The visitor of to-day who cares to explore Sarzana and the other towns of Lunigiana will find more than one trace of Castruccio's lordship. The most striking monument of his prowess is the long low castle of Sarzanello, which stands picturesquely on a hill outside Sarzana. A walk round the ramparts of Sarzana, to which is attached another of the imposing circular fortifications, will give one some idea of the strength of the old capital. From these ramparts, too, one gets a good view of the cathedral, whose white marble façade is the most beautiful work of art in Lunigiana, making the church a worthy casket for the ashes of the ambitious and masterful soldier. His renown survives, too, and in more vital form, in the names

imprinted on the city, such as Via Castruccio, Osteria Castruccio.

The group of towns extending from Sarzana to Massa has not only its historical memories, but its busy contemporary life. They are a series of workshops attached to the great Carrara quarries, from which the marble blocks are brought down partly by a railway, partly by two-wheeled carts drawn by a yoke of oxen. These are very picturesque, the oxen seeming to be trying to match in glittering whiteness the load they are pulling in their slow, majestic way.

The Lunigiana country is a sort of inversion of the Viareggio district. Here one feels the proximity and the awesome spell of the Apuan Alps, and only guesses the presence of the sea in the distance. The mountains, whose flanks are cruelly gashed by ages of quarrying, exercise a strange fascination. The keen walker will find himself appealed to, alike by their boldly beckoning peaks and by their more softly inviting recesses. And he will probably decide to pass a day or two among them, exploring, not only the quarries—which ought perhaps to be reckoned among the antiquities of Lunigiana—but the quieter solitudes.

Neither Viareggio nor its surroundings offers the visitor much in the way of art treasures. But Pisa and Lucca can each be visited in a day, and an occasional run over to these cities may well form a part of his winter programme. At Pisa, after seeing the triad of architectural wonders, one may take a delightful walk along the quays of the Arno, visiting such churches as the little white Gothic chapel, S. Maria della Spina, and the beautiful S. Paolo. A visit to Lucca, the mother city, should not be missed by a sojourner in Viareggio. You will not get quite so long a day there as

at Pisa, but the journey itself is much more interesting, since the railway, after crossing the plain with its rhines and its rice-fields—much flooded in the winter and reminding a West-countryman of Sedgmoor—gently climbs among the low, rounded mountains. After tiring the eye by looking at church façades and paintings, you may walk round the ramparts and enjoy the double view of the city and of the surrounding hills. If you make the journey in the later spring you should, on returning, try to walk from the station Nozzano down to the plain, where you can rejoin the railway at Massarosa. The view, just before you descend, of the wide-stretching Lake of Massaciuccoli and the flooded plain lying below you is worth the exertion of a walk ; and in descending you can amuse yourself by listening to the cicerone, who will descant eloquently on a bit of Roman ruin—a few fragments of brick wall with arches—popularly baptized with the familiar title, “ Bagni di Nerone,” which your instructor will render more elegantly as “ Terme di Nerone.”

## XI

### BAVENO IN AUTUMN

TO the hurrying tourist who approaches the Italian lakes by the Simplon, Baveno is merely the halting-place of a night before he pushes on to Stresa or Pallanza, or to one of the favourite resorts of the Como shore. A charming hotel with a garden enticing to luxurious indolence cannot prevail against the disquieting proximity of granite quarries and of a mile and more of granite worksheds along the shore, to which is now added the unsightly disorder of the half-made Simplon railway.<sup>1</sup> Yet it has its own peculiar attractions, due in part to the circumstance that it is just being drawn by the railway out of its old-world retirement into the current of industrial progress. In spite of quarryman and navvy, it can still satisfy even an exacting lover of quiet retreats. The steep slopes of Monte Mottarone behind it supply delightful walks, up among vineyards and chestnut groves, across cool lush gullies where musical streams are hidden under thick foliage, and through a series of villages looking mouldy and deserted. As you climb you command a wider and wider sweep of the placid lake, whose entranced islands seem never to grow weary of contemplating, Narcissus-like, their soft reflections.

The pebbly shore opposite the Borromean Islands is a pleasant place for idling away a warm September morning. The surface of the lake is of a glassy smooth-

<sup>1</sup> Our visit was in 1903, before the railway was completed.



ness, its silvery brightness just tinged here and there with a delicate blue. It reflects softly yet distinctly all the surroundings—the finely moulded forms of Sasso di Ferro and the other mountains opposite, as well as the dark foliage and the warm-hued villas and other buildings of the shores and the low islands. The barely audible tinkle of the wee wavelets as they lap the beach hardly swells into a disturbing sound when a passing steamer makes a minute's plashing. The autumn haze, though fine enough, is sufficient to invest things seen with a degree of unsubstantiality, and somehow it seems to impart a softness also to the impressions of the ear. The voices of the rowers in the barges which glide past us, with their bright awnings and long rudders, are half submerged in the mellow silence ; and the tones of the bells of the islands and the opposite shores, as one after another they toll the passing hour, lose their rasping edges and grow rounded and softened in the liquid air. The lizards which haunt the warm stones of the beach look as if they too were entranced by the prevailing quietude.

Not that Baveno is really asleep even here at its watery boundary. A gentle play of human life reaches us, just enough to add to our pleasure without disturbing the luxurious mood of contemplation. Women bring their linen and, kneeling on a kind of tiny wooden jetty, proceed to subject it to vigorous sousings and rubbings, enlivening the occupation with a good deal of chattering and laughing. As if to demonstrate that it is more than half play, young children join in the washing operations. A girl of ten gathers up her skirts and sets about dipping and scrubbing a goodly pile of linen which she has brought on her back. She has three younger comrades, a girl of six, a boy of four, and a

mite of a year, who together form a compact group. The six-year-old kneels on some stones placed for her by the elder girl and makes a pretty pretence at cleansing. Meanwhile the boy, arrayed in petticoats and long white drawers, ventures on reckless wadings, which end in the wetting of his garments; so that the little laundress soon has to stop her play-work and do some mild scolding. Presently a steamer draws near, and the mite of the party is frightened and begins to cry; and again the girl leaves her linen, and standing by the alarmed infant, draws it close to her, so that its face is covered and the big steamer loses its terrors. After which little disturbance all proceeds smoothly and noiselessly again, sinking into a half-perceived detail of the whole restful scene.

Only rarely is the large calm of the hour broken by the intrusion of something having to do with the exciting issues of life. A little way from us, on the beach opposite the Isola dei Pescatori, is seated a woman with a hard, tense look, suggestive of anything but peaceful contemplation. Presently there arrives a boat rowed by an old man. The woman receives him with quite a little storm of ominous sounds and gestures. She steps into the boat, and the man pulls off from the shore in the direction of the island. And now the woman, sitting opposite to him in the stern of the boat, and having him at her mercy, renews what look like vigorous attacks. The movements of her arm are distinctly menacing, and the interest of the drowsy spectator is screwed up to an almost tragic intensity when she half stands up in the rickety *barca*. It hurts the ear to listen to the melody of Italian speech thus torn into a number of harsh staccato shrieks. The volley of disorganised sound is fired off again and again, after

judicious pauses, growing fainter as the boat recedes, though never losing its characteristic vixen raspingness ; till even the breath of outraged womanhood kept waiting for its dinner by man's dilatoriness exhausts itself, and she appears to settle down into a sullen silence. The victim of these explosions, after having made at the outset one lame attempt at self-defence, sits perfectly passive, as though well seasoned to petticoat storms. Perhaps the mechanical monotony of the rowing has lulled him into a partial sleep, in which even explosive sounds cease to annoy. The scene struck us as an inversion of the humorous one in Fogazzaro's *Piccolo Mondo Antico*, in which the controller, whose olfactory imagination is already assailed by odours of the coming *pranzo* at the great house, bundles his delaying wife into the boat to face the waves of Lake Lugano.

The centre of Baveno life is the rudimentary piazza behind the landing-stage, and the connected Corso which runs along the shore. This is shaded in the morning by an avenue of plane trees, and in the afternoon by a row of shops and cafés. The quay near the little pier is apt in the season to be quite crowded for a few minutes when the steamer arrives. Yet even at these times of commotion the quiet and dignified Bavenese do not allow themselves to be obstreperous. You will see the gangway drawn on board with a decorous economy of language. The luggage is wheeled to and from the jetty by two handsome brothers, with heads and necks of the old Roman pattern, who from their dignity of bearing and freedom from fussiness might be assisting in some beautiful ceremony. The little steamer is, no doubt, an intruder. For some minutes it makes havoc of the washing operations on the beach, and it rudely disturbs the youths

fishing from the quay, who are apt to grow half-hypnotised with their crystal-gazing into the calm blue depths of the lake. Yet it comes but rarely, and never stays long. When it is away the seats on the landing-place are mostly unoccupied, though in fine weather you will be sure of finding loungers in the avenue. A permanent feature of the spot is a fruit-stall shaded by a huge umbrella, under which an old man seems to pass the day in long stretches of somnolence varied by moments of active wakefulness. Sitting with closed eyes just behind his stall he keeps an ear on promising footsteps, and is perfectly prepared to quote his highest figure as soon as he is asked the price of grapes or green figs. During a good part of the working day the café proprietors and others will loiter in the agreeable shade of the plane trees, though they, too, will not miss the chance of doing business.

A visitor soon discovers that in Baveno, side by side with the sluggish current of old-world life, there runs a more rapid stream of modern industrial activity. The construction of the Simplon railway goes on close to the cathedral, whose lofty belfry seems to tell the ear of olden time,<sup>1</sup> and closer still to the little Campo Santo, which seems to have taken pains to select the most retired of corners. The eye turns from a perfect old-world picture, say a yoke of large white oxen, with the dark brown eyes that Homer loved, moving slowly with a fine sway of head and shoulders as they draw their load of granite from some near quarry to the shore, and lights on a new railway arch, where a group of Italian masons are showing their excellent handi-

<sup>1</sup> One may be told by an inhabitant that this is the oldest church on the Lago Maggiore. But this can hardly apply to the bulk of the structure.



craft. If you walk along the shore to the north, where granite-workers make a perpetual clicking in their sheds, you may overhear scraps of American-English, which seem to bring suddenly into the languid air of the lakes a cool current from the new world. At noon the indolent stillness of the front gives place for a moment to something of the commotion of a modern city, as workmen step quickly to the post office to fetch their socialistic journal, and young women on their way home from a neighbouring factory pass with something of the resolute, preoccupied air of a Paris grisette. In the evening one may see returning briskly to the town, along with a file of granite cutters, a couple of young girls leisurely bringing home the cows, to which is added sometimes a sheep or a goat, from the pasturage. The girls call gently to the cows, who seem to understand. If, in response to a call, a cow unadvisedly stops and looks round, as if for a *bonne bouche*, one of the girls will smartly seize it by the cord which has been trailing. The tricked animal makes a half-hearted attempt to free itself, but soon abandons the struggle, turning to its captor for the expected mouthful. This time it is not disappointed, the girl giving it the leavings of her chestnuts.

Although the background of hurrying modern life makes itself felt here and there, a visitor may easily escape from all reminders of it into the unmolested haunts of pastoral peace. On the acclivities just behind the town are steepish cobbled ways, and a mile or so of a new road with an easy gradient, which years ago started valiantly with the intention of reaching Orta. A short climb up one of these ways brings us to vineyards and chestnut groves, where soft murmurings of voices tell of the happy hours of



GRANITE WORKERS' SHED, BAVENO.



fruit-gathering, in which the whole family takes part. Presently women and children may be seen standing on short ladders and taking the bunches of dark grapes from the vines, which are suspended between the fruit trees. Higher up the road men are heard in the trees beating down the chestnuts. Pretty idyllic pictures await the rambler here also. A goat is tethered close to the path, and begins to bleat in alarm as the stranger approaches. A woman is then perceived a little way off pulling leaves from the vines. On hearing the bleating she proceeds, mother-like, to quiet it by giving it a handful of leaves.

The villages, with their pretty names, Romanico, Campino, etc., through which one passes on this ramble, have something delightfully quaint in their poor little piazzas, which often bear a high-sounding name, and in their narrow dusky *vicoli*. The houses, which look roughly built, derive a certain picturesqueness from their deep eaves, outside stairways, wooden galleries, and pergolas. A good deal of the work of the house is done in the galleries. It is here that the linen is hung out to dry, and ears of maize, pumpkins, and other treasures stored away, all of which adds to the buildings a valuable decorative element of colour. Another village, Oltrefiume, to the north of Baveno on the opposite side of the broad torrent-bed, is hardly less valuable for the sketcher, though neither can compete with the fascinating *marina* and *vicolo* of the Isola dei Pescatori.

In the pleasant half light and coolness of the early evening a stroll through one of these villages, or through the narrow *vicoli* and tiny piazzas which can be found in Baveno itself, just behind its genteel front, will supply many an attractive low-toned picture. The houses now



grow visibly inhabited, women and children gathering for gossip in the galleries and near the doorways. The cows and goats are being penned up for the night, while water is being fetched from a fountain just below a fresco of the crucifixion, and carried home in the graceful Italian fashion in prettily shaped pitchers. The sounds harmonise well with the quiet half-sombre colouring. The children calling one to another prolong the low musical vowel-sounds, as though the hour were affecting them too with its strange beauty. The church bell rings the Ave Maria, repeating slowly the plaintive cadence *f, e, d*, never succeeding, so it seems, in reaching the tonic *c* below. The melancholy effect of this is increased by the contrast between the evening and the noonday phrase; for in the latter the tonic is not only reached, but made prominent by repetition, thus: *f—d, e—c, d—c*.

If one would really know Baveno he should stay on after the flitting of the tourist crowd from the lakes early in October. It is now that the trees, vines, and creepers take on their richest colouring. The deserted villa gardens are aglow with hues of red and yellow. Maples, chestnuts, and several varieties of oak give the deeper tones, while sycamores and poplars add the brighter golden hues. The variegated colouring of the trees and shrubs seems to image itself in the fallen leaves which strew the bright dewy grass. Behind, the blue mountains make a soft background, which raises the mass of warm colour to a yet higher degree of brilliance. As one stands before the gate of one of the gardens the last faint odours of the oleander (*olea fragrans*) deepen the luxurious yet half-saddening sense of autumn.

It is in these October days that one gains the

fullest realisation of the vintage season. A smell of new wine pervades the air. There is much transporting of casks by horses, mules, and donkeys, often unequally yoked. In front of the *osterie*, and of private houses too, carts are drawn up, in which bare-legged men standing in casks tread down the dark luscious grapes. One may sometimes enjoy the spectacle of this simple type of wine-press on the sunlit shore. Just before us is moored a barge containing two big casks in which grapes are being crushed. After a spell of this exertion the two crushers step out of the casks and lie in the sunshine, stretching out legs wet with the purple juice and glistening in the rays of the declining sun. Two boys now come on board, each bringing a keg, which the men, taking copper ladles, proceed to fill with the purple mash of grapes. Then they lie down again, the boys go off, and there comes on board a smart boatman in a white naval suit. After bandying some jocose words with the wine-pressers, he succeeds in getting a good draught from each of the casks. We enjoy his look of superiority as he wipes his ruddy lips with the hand, critically surveys his pants and shirt as if suspicious of wine-stains, and then proceeds with the pose of a connoisseur to pass judgment on the contents of the casks. How far, one asks oneself, have scenes like this changed in character since Virgil's time?

The vines fill a large place in the industry of these Maggiore peasants. After the grapes have yielded their wine-juice they may be seen lying in crushed heaps in the galleries of the houses. Excellent schnapps, one learns, is decocted out of these leavings of the vintner. And after the grapes have thus supplied two beverages they are put to further use by being dried and pressed into cakes, which serve as valuable fuel. The vine-

leaves, too, are made use of, partly as food, partly as bedding for the goats and other quadrupeds. The other staple article of industry, the chestnut, shares in this multiplicity of uses. Not only do the nuts supply one chief article of food, but the burrs, the leaves, and the branches are turned into fuel and bedding.

Towards the end of October heavy rains are wont to fall in the lake-district, continuing, in the year of our sojourn, uninterrupted for five days. The rain falls straight and evenly for the most part, though high winds now and then drive it against the sides of the trees and hasten the shedding of the leaves. Men walk to the granite sheds under large green or red umbrellas, as if they wished to save the brilliant colouring of autumn from complete extinction. The lake, fed by many swollen torrents, rises a metre and more above the summer level. Blocks of granite on the beach may be seen half covered with water, and the willows along the shore, which always look as if they were trying to pass themselves off on the unwary for olive trees, are a good third of their height in the flood.

Autumn gales make a strange transformation of the calm mirror-like level of the summer lake. A fierce blue of unnameable depth gives it a look of passionate life, while the large waves with their dark furrows and their white-streaked ridges deepen the impression of sudden transition from dreamy repose to mad excitement. The contrast of vivid colour extends to the flat shore at the end of our small arm of the lake, where the deep saturated blue of the water meets the bright green of the grass, the paler bluish greens of the agitated poplars and willows, and the warmer tints of the browsing cattle. The steamers, cut down to the requirements of the winter *orario*, have hard work to land

their few passengers now that the large billows are running riot.

The later October days offer special attractions to the walker. The depressing heats are over, and there is still on the mountain-sides a goodly supply of autumn colour. We had waited for the perfect autumn day before making the ascent of Monte Mottarone, the hotel of which had long been teasingly peeping down on us from the sky-line. At last it came: such a day, we like to think, as George Meredith must have chanced on before he penned his delightful description of the ascent, at the early morning hour, by the Italian patriots who were to meet their leader on the summit.<sup>1</sup> It is a day brilliantly sunny yet appreciably cool, and the air, though softly toned below with touches of autumn haze, is here on the mountain of a sharp translucence. We start early, and our faces are pricked by the frosty air as we climb through the shaded way and the dusky village streets. Higher up we pass through dense chestnut groves, where the rustling of our feet in deep layers of leaves brings home to us the great harvesting work of the winds. After this we emerge upon open grassy slopes and get pleasantly warmed by the sun. Pretty "Alpi" nestle in the hollows, whitish houses embowered in beech trees reminding us of Welsh mountain farms. The browns and yellows of the beeches and birches keep one in touch with ruddy-faced autumn. The Maggiore spreads out her long bright arms below us, and smaller sheets of water rise into view to the south and to the east; while northwards

<sup>1</sup> *Vittoria*, Vol. I, chap. I, "Up Monte Mottarone." So far as I can gather, Baveno took but little part in the War of Liberation. Local tradition tells of a small Austrian 'man-of-war' that crossed the lake from Laveno, and was driven back by the Bavenese.



snow-peaks peep over the nearer serrated ridges. Our donkey and her driver, a peasant girl named Rosa, begin to feel the fatigues of the climb. The former cannot resist the seductions of mountain grass for an asinine appetite whetted by exertion and crisp mountain air, and the resulting delays begin to be disquieting. Rosa, who has the Italian quickness in noting signs of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, does her best to incite the animal to new aspirations. At the same time, with the characteristic pride of the hired peasant, she zealously defends her charge against the suspicion of incompetence, never failing to pronounce it "molto intelligente" when it manages to pick its way across a bit of loose stones or a patch of boggy ground. From what one suspects was an absurd respect for appearances, Rosa has pinched her unaccustomed feet into a pair of new shoes. The pinching begins to give rise to low moaning sounds and to loss of ground on the part of the donkey's driver. At length she can bear it no longer, and with a fine determination to smother her pride sits down, takes off her shoes, and proceeds to walk in her stockings. Our progress is now appreciably more rapid, and we reach the hotel in time for a rather late lunch. The white apparition of Monte Rosa rising suddenly behind the Mottarone startles for a moment, before its magnificent range of pendent snow and ice glistening in the sun fills us with a more agreeable kind of emotion. We feel as if, after climbing another Purgatorio, we had got sight of our Paradiso. A short walk above the hotel brings us to the summit; from which is opened up the view to the west with more snow-peaks, and the lovely Lake Orta lying just below our feet.

Rosa and her donkey, like ourselves, now become engrossed in the belated meal. The girl does not care

for meat, and asks for the beloved *minestra*, a thin rice soup flavoured by bits of bacon. And her instinct seems to be a sound one, for the Baveno doctor tells us that the peasants do better on this soup and polenta than on a meat diet.

We descend even more slowly than we ascended, for progress down the steep cobbled way is a difficult achievement even for a donkey that is "molto intelligente." Darkness overtakes us before we are clear of the cobbles and feel secure again on a good open road.<sup>1</sup>

The rains and fierce autumn winds make no difference to the occupants of the unwallled granite sheds, where the click of the chisel is heard from morning to evening. The stone carvers include men and boys whose ages range down to a low figure. How slow the work seems, as one stands and watches for a minute or two the descent of the hammer on the stout metal chipper. The result, so far as one can see, is only the detachment of a tiny flake or two and a little gritty dust. Yet if one returns after two or three hours one will note a real advance. The tabular surface is getting smoother, and the column rounder—readier for the barge which lies moored close to the shore waiting to carry off the finished product. Our friendly Italian doctor tells us that the men earn only three or four lire a day.<sup>2</sup> Many are induced to go to the United States, where they gain the same number of dollars. But since they are there required to work in closed instead of in open sheds, and to use machines which necessitate their bending close over the stones, they are apt to get stone-dust

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written a funicular railway has been constructed from Stresa to the hotel. When I last heard of it in June, 1911, it was to be opened in the autumn.

<sup>2</sup> Wages are said to have risen considerably since this was written.

into their lungs and to develop pulmonary trouble. This drives them back to Italy for a time; yet so much mightier is the attraction of the dollar than that of the lira that after recuperating they are pretty certain to return to the New World.

The later autumn brings to these lake peasants more than one highly prized festa. We saw one celebrated in Oltrefiume the last Sunday in October. In the afternoon families dressed in bright festal raiment could be seen wending their way from Baveno to the village through the vineyards and across the wide stony bed of the river. Mass was being celebrated in the small church, while outside, only a hundred yards away, a band played familiar opera airs. Booths tempted the small crowd with piles of cakes and other dainties. In the yard of an adjoining *osteria* young women, with bare heads, danced slowly and gracefully with partners mostly of their own sex. So wisely in these southern Catholic countries are the claims of the Church tempered with a generous allowance of mundane entertainment.

A festa of a very different complexion, that of "Tutti Morti" (All Souls) fell about a week later (November 2nd); though at Baveno the observance was postponed a week beyond this date. On the preceding afternoon women and children could be seen going in groups to the cemetery. There they spent an hour or more in carefully weeding the grave mounds, smoothing the mould, and planting single flowers of the chrysanthemum, so as to make a cross or other design. Tombstones were scrubbed and then decorated with wreaths of flowers and photographs of the dead. It was pleasant to note that the graves of an Englishman and his wife were made pretty with flowers in pots by hospitable Bavenese hands. The kneeling figures

silhouetted against the rosy western sky would have supplied a painter with a promising motive. On the festa morning after mass there was a procession from the church to the Campo Santo, where the priest intoned a short service, accompanied by two or three boys, who listlessly droned it after him. The function struck one as purely formal, and only a couple of old women who sat near the priest made any attempt to take part in it by following the prayers in their book. What the people appear to understand by this festa is an affectionate rite, an act of family piety. It is the setting apart of a whole day to a direct personal communion with their dead, into which much silent prayer enters : a communion which is often prolonged through the night under the soft light of candles. This festa holds a place in the heart of Italians of all classes. A servant girl will not hesitate to spend one-half of a month's wages in decorating the grave of her mother or father. Widows will travel a hundred miles and more in order to take part in the service for the dead. A Protestant visitor can hardly fail to be touched by the sense of the durability of the family group which these simple, warm-hearted people of the South share with the little girl in Wordsworth's poem.

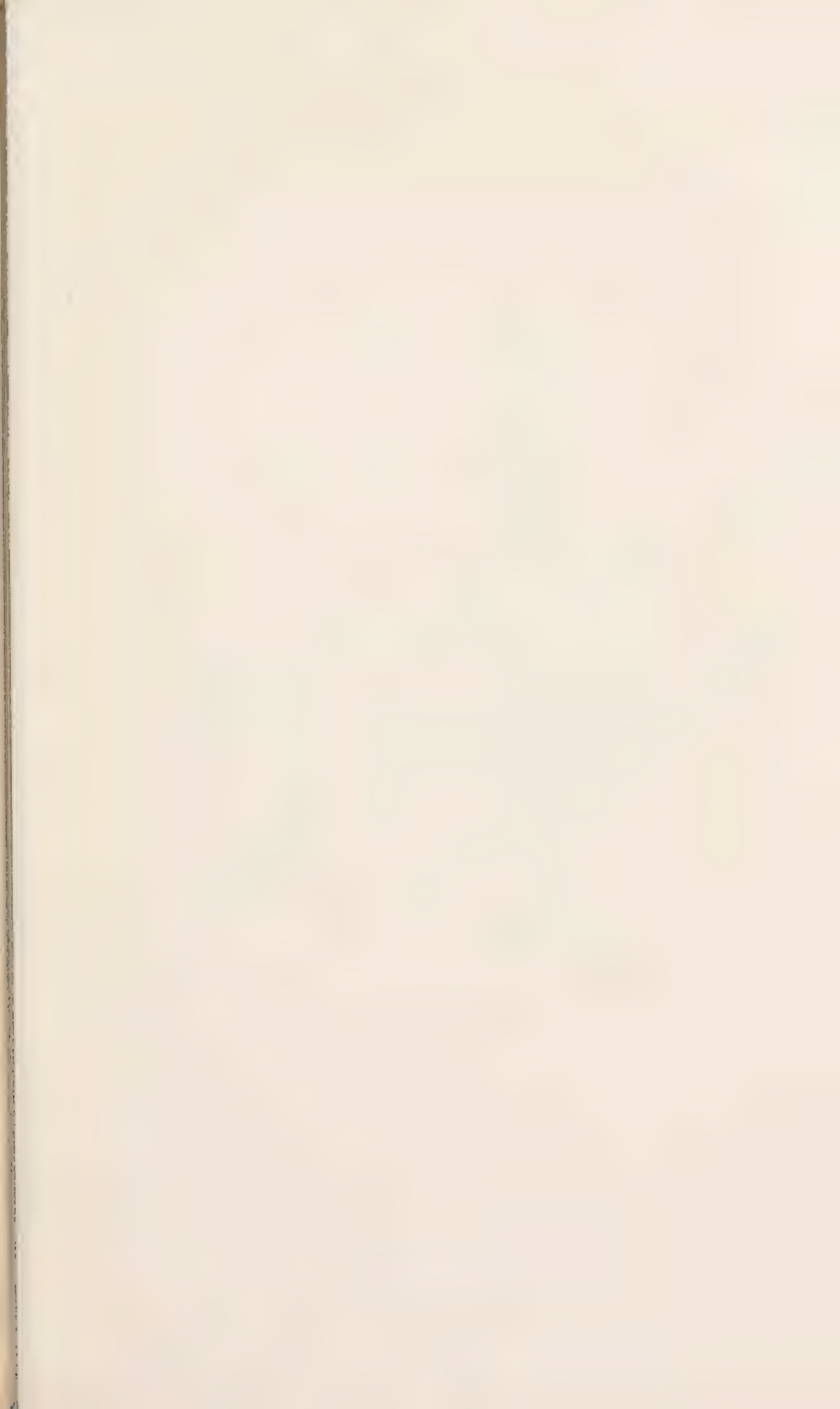


## XII

### A TICINESE VILLAGE

THE picturesque villages which perch themselves above the Italian Lakes have a way of shunning the eye of the stranger who visits the district in the leafy month of May. Chestnut woods now reinforce the repellent cobbled *strade* in guarding many of those lying on the steep sides of Como and Maggiore. Yet it is rare to light on one which, though reached by a good post road, has managed to conceal itself quite so skilfully as Rovio, a considerable Swiss village on the eastern slopes of Lugano. This place has set itself under the long wall of crag and beech-wood which forms the western slope of Monte Generoso, on a mountain terrace, the approach to which from below is through dense woods of acacia and other trees. A stranger should know where to look, if he wishes to snatch a glimpse of it from the steamboat; and, even after seeing it from the lake, he would probably find it difficult to strike the point where the zigzagging road begins its shaded climb.

On reaching the green terrace along which the line of the village runs, a seeker after quiet places might feel a shade of disappointment; for the campanile in front of him, in its overbearing height and its tawdry classical design, suggests a straining after the imposing, and a foolish effort to balance the fine waterfall which makes a natural ornament at the other end of the village.





THE PIAZZA, ROVIO (TICINO).

But, as soon as he found himself within the piazza with which the village begins, he would be relieved of any apprehension of vulgar display. It shows itself at once to be a spacious resting-place, where the villagers, shaded by ample foliage, may sit and enjoy their indolent hours. It is only half-enclosed by buildings ; and among these will be found no stately façades, nothing but the base of the campanile and the long portico of the church with its arched openings, to suggest the dignity of a piazza ; while even the imposing look of these is tempered by the soothing inscription :

“ Non ti turbi il feral guardo di morte ;  
Ti apri, se no'l sai, del ciel le porte.”

For the rest, the only noticeable features are a plain building which bears the name of Infant School (*Asilo infantile*), and a tiny chapel raised on a point of rock, beyond which may be spied the gate of a retired Campo-Santo.

Further inspection confirms the impression of the deep quietude, and something of the ascetic simplicity, of a hermitage. Neither of the two narrow parallel streets of which the village consists can be called a thoroughfare ; and, during most of the day, even pedestrians are rarely seen in them. But for one or two larger houses, the summer resort of well-to-do folk, one finds a uniform modesty of abode which suggests a stringent socialistic regime. The type of structure is simple : a roughly built stone house, which derives an unfinished look from the big lacunae left under its eaves ; a shy Quaker-like indulgence in the luxury of colour being hinted at in the variation of the slightly warm



tones of the stone by patches of brighter stucco and red brickwork. Italian touches are contributed by round archways, and by galleries thrown across the streets. One or two tiny shops can be discovered by careful searching; but a thirsty traveller would look in vain for an inn, the only trace of one being the tantalising word "Hotel," imperfectly effaced by the whitewasher on what is now a private house. The sole accommodation for the visitor is a *Kurhaus*; <sup>1</sup> which, as the name suggests, is an excrescence, lying well away from the village. As for the satisfaction of native cravings, there exist the *cantine* or small wine-taverns, which, with their little skittle alleys, make pleasant lounges in the adjoining woods. Only one of these has had the hardihood to plant itself on a road-side; and this, it must be confessed, wears a look highly menacing to any ascetic tendencies in the villagers. It bears the pagan sign *Al Mirto* ("At the sign of the myrtle tree"); to which is appended the fresco drawing of a florid young Bacchus who, untrammelled by any garment save a spiral coil of blue scarf, and crowned by a wreath of vine-leaves, gaily bestrides a cask, and holds out in his left hand a decanter half-emptied of its red wine. Yet the detection of this allurements to bibulous indulgence need not greatly alarm the stranger, even should he be an abstemious Briton; for he will find that, unlike his home taverns, the *cantina* is closed on working days, and opened only on Sundays and other festas.

With the characteristics of the village those of its surroundings combine in a happy harmony. By an odd inversion of things, the quiet of the street seems here to have overflowed into the country. The road in which

<sup>1</sup> Our visit was in the early summer of 1903.

the riotous Bacchus flourishes his decanter, and which connects Rovio with a second village or small town, is for the most part as solitary as a drive in the demesne of an Irish absentee. The walker will find himself for the most part on pathways, some of which wind among the vineyards and fields of the green mountain terrace, while rougher and steeper ones climb through the chestnut groves and the thickets of low beech which lie above these, to clearings where the bells of ruminant cows, or the axe of the woodman, let you hear the soft footfall of Time. Tranquillity seems here to be absorbed at every mental pore. The lake below sleeps peacefully in its narrow mountain cradle. The monochrome green of lake and hills, which are wooded to their summits, seems somehow to lull the sense. The three tiny snow-peaks of Monte Rosa, which peep over the hills to the north-west, their dazzling white softened and slightly encarmined by the haze, look like the gateway to a far-off slumbering dream-world. An abundance of dainty flowers, attesting the absence of marauding hands, takes one to the warm fragrant bosom of Nature. Masses of wild laburnum and acacia bloom light up the gloomy recesses of the woods, the latter tempering the joyous effect of its brightness with a heavy narcotic perfume. The cyclamen and the narcissus are growing rare, but the white mantle of the latter has descended on the lily-of-the-valley; while, in addition to periwinkles and other modest home-products, may be found the dark columbine, the single peony, and the asphodel.

Animal life on this mountain terrace seems to be affected with the same luxurious somnolence. Among the birds, the chaffinch and the black-cap contribute no doubt a fully wakeful sound; and so does the swallow, as it cleaves the still air with a noise which

suggests the rending of a garment. Yet the effect of this exuberant vitality is more than counteracted by the fluty note of the blackbird, and the soft, diffused call of the cuckoo ; while even the music of the nightingale, which seems to have no long pauses, takes on here something of the character of a tender lullaby. All the day long, the monotonous iteration of the *cicale* contributes somehow to the feeling of quietude. Most soothing of all, perhaps, is the sight of the lizards, some large and beautifully coloured with bluish and yellowish tones of green, as they lie sleepily in the sun-warmed places. They will let you approach them if you move gently ; and then you may hum a tune to them, and they will come out of their recesses and turn their heads towards you, half hypnotised by the soft sounds ; though, if you hurry past their warm couches, you may be startled by a sudden rustling of the dead leaves as the timid creatures, wakened from their sun-trance by your noisy footfall, or your moving shadow, take to swift flight. The snakes, too, which are numerous, seem to be half-asleep as, on the stranger's approach to their lounges, they slowly uncoil themselves and creep lazily to some hiding-place. But it is in the evening, when the darkness which has just fallen on the tall ripe grass is softly lit by a swarm of fireflies, slowly weaving its mazy dance above the closed and slumbering flowers, that one gets the clearest impression of the hushed dream-like life of these slopes of Monte Generoso.

The restful spirit of the South seems to have breathed upon the human inhabitants too. To one coming to the place from Italy, certain characteristics of the Swiss will, no doubt, at once betray themselves. Such a person may gratefully recognise their excellent way of despatching business at the post-office. Yet a slight

inspection of the people is enough to convince one that they differ widely from the rest of the Swiss. Their graceful form and carriage, the gentleness of their accost, and the fine dignity of their manner would, apart from their mellifluous Italian speech, stamp them as of another race, bred in a less rude climate. A pleasant smile may greet you from a woman's face, half-hidden beneath a bundle of hay or a faggot of beech-wood. Young women, having an unexpected look of refinement, whom a stranger chances to encounter in their evening walk, are ready to talk with him about their life in the watch-factory hard by. They show pleasure, and something of pride too, in assuring him of their contentment with work which they always beautify with an accompaniment of song, and will meet a timidly introduced question as to wages with a gentle shrug of the shoulders and a smiling: "Così, Così." The same serene contentment looks out from the face of the woodman who, on seeing a stranger approach, interrupts the pruning of the branch, or the binding of the faggot, to welcome him with a greeting. The low sounds of women's voices in the pauses of their field-work, which reach the stranger through his bedroom window in the cool early morning, chime in sweetly with the notes of the warblers, as parts of one matin thanksgiving. Even the obstreperous temper of youth seems to be subdued to the prevailing tone of happy tranquillity. As you pass the open schoolroom window, you hear no sound of disorder, only the mellow monotony of the school-mistress's voice; nor is your ear ever offended by excess of noise in the restful piazza, whither the infant class betakes itself in the morning heat, and where boys disport themselves in the evening coolness.

The recreations of this delightful people are hardly a



shade less subdued than their occupations. Towards eight o'clock in the evening, they are wont to gather in the piazza for soft murmuring talk, or for the late Mass in the church. The younger women, in pairs or trios, may saunter slowly to a little chapel overlooking the lake. Here one will see no trace of vulgar flirtation ; for these quiet walkers are gentle pilgrims, bent, like those who are entering the church, on evening worship. They look down on the darkening surface of the lake, on which one or two fishing boats are scratching tiny lines of light, and from which ascend faint snatches of even-song ; and then they turn their wondering eyes northwards to the high Alps, the forms of which are silhouetted against the warm tints of the Tramonto.

Thus noiselessly do the common days glide by in this charmed village. Even the uncommon days of festa, which break the monotonous flow of events, hardly bring excitement. The entertainments provided in the piazza may, on one of these holidays, reach the magnitude of a travelling bear or a brace of acrobats ; yet the villagers show no sign of wild enthusiasm, but just sit and look on musingly, with their smile of quiet satisfaction. At such a moment, a stranger might half fancy himself to be in some Eastern village, where emotion plays in the softest of keys.

The gentle spirit of Rovio, its half-Oriental contemplation and its Epicurean preference for the quiet pleasures, reveals itself most clearly in its church processions. A stranger who has been permitted to take the modest part of onlooker in the festa of Corpus Domini may count himself privileged. This function seems properly to fall on the second Thursday after Whitsuntide ; but in Rovio, when we saw it, it was held on the following Sunday, apparently to suit the conveni-

ence of the extraneous priests who were to officiate. The holy-day is ushered in on the afternoon of the Saturday by a lively play of the church bells. They sound to us at this hour less demoniacal than they had sounded to George Meredith before he wrote the brilliant crescendo passage on their effect in the night watches, smiting the pillows of his party "a shattering blow," and rousing "an insurgent rabble in their bosoms."<sup>1</sup> A small boy may be seen high up in the campanile, manipulating (so it looks) a kind of keyboard, and producing out of the first three notes of the diatonic scale a quick measure which makes a formless kind of tune, half-gleeful, half-plaintive. Meanwhile, people are busy cleaning the church and the streets. Early on the Sunday, the jingle of the bells is renewed. The women and children are about betimes; for much has to be done before the streets are made beautiful for the passing of the divine presence. A kind of dado of white sheets and coverlets, some of the latter beautifully embroidered, is fastened along the walls on each side of the narrow street, lighting it up in a curious way. Colour is added by fresh green boughs strewn on the borders of the street, by roses pinned on the dados, and by a rich variety of rugs and other coloured fabrics hung from the upper windows of the houses and galleries. At each of the two altars, placed at the angles where a cross street meets the main ones, special decorative efforts are being made. The altars are covered with bright draperies and flowers, while, on the ground in front, are placed pretty cushions for the priests to kneel on; and rose petals are strewn with bounteous hand. The farther portions of the main streets, along which the procession is not to pass, are curtained off by white hangings. The dresses of the

<sup>1</sup> *Diana of the Crossways*, chap. xvi.

children enhance the brightness of the scene ; and a glint or two of sunshine (for the morning is cloudy), falling benignly on the festal colouring, complete the transfiguration of the dingy dwelling-place of common days. About half-past ten, the priest of the village, accompanied by a friar, comes and inspects the work, offering one or two suggestions to the women decorators. All goes on quietly, without fun or loud talk, yet with free expression of the happy mood proper to church decoration. Soon the bell summons to Mass ; and some of the workers may be seen almost hurrying, in the Rovio sense of this word, to the church portico.

Another outburst of the clatter of the bells tells us that Mass is over, and that the much-expected procession is about to form itself. There it is, just as the sun grants another benign ray, moving slowly across the piazza, and entering the shaded street. We take up a position near the first altar, and are able to look over its whole length. At the head walk, side by side, three young women wearing mantillas, the one in the middle bearing an empty canopy, and each of the others a tall candlestick. Then follow a double line of women in black, some young girls in white frocks and wreaths of flowers, and a few men in red cassocks—members of a *confraternità* or guild. After this we have the central portion of the procession—three or four boys, surpliced and waving censers, followed by three priests, among whom one recognises the two inspectors of the decorations, wearing richly embroidered copes, and covered by a canopy carried by four men. A double line of men in black, noticeably shorter than that of the women in front, winds up the procession. As a pageant it is modest enough ; and, from what one hears about the festa as conducted in the town of Lugano, much seems to have

been omitted which would have helped to show its significance. Yet it acquires an impressiveness from the perfect bearing of those who take part in it. At the first altar, which is reached soon after noon, it halts; and, after the tapers have been lit, the priests, kneeling on the cushions, offer a short prayer. The whole ceremony lasts less than half an hour. As soon as the procession has passed, thrifty housewives, with an eye on the threatening clouds, begin to take down the valuable hangings, and hurry indoors to prepare the belated Sunday dinner.

The charm of the spectacle lay in the natural and beautiful expression of a spiritual uplifting, of a holy joy. No giggling or other sign of irreverence marred its dignity; though a smile in one of the pauses, when a woman's loud voice was heard in an adjoining house, showed the perfect naturalness of mental attitude in its participators. All seemed to be filled with the sense of a beautiful rite, and of the supreme value of the minutes during which their humble dwelling-place was glorified by the visit of something half-divine. One could not but go back in imagination to all the hours of looking forward and getting ready—the gathering of the leaves and flowers, the cleansing, the renewing of dresses and the rest—all for a few fleeting minutes. Yet one recognised that these simple villagers were profoundly right, that a true wisdom lay behind all their zealous painstaking, which in itself was a holiday-making lit up with glad hopes, and that the brief fruition of these hopes had been an ample reward. Perhaps they realised, in a dim way, the poet's assurance, that a thing of beauty, even though transient, remains a joy for ever.

In the afternoon of our festa, rain fell; and Rovio resumed its quietest aspect. In the evening, the sky



cleared a little ; and the devout young women had their quiet walk to the chapel above the lake. They had put aside their festal gowns for the quieter apparel of every day. Nevertheless, a new light lay on their faces ; and there was no setting sun to account for it.

### XIII

#### AN OLD PASS INTO ITALY

**O**LD things, when they fall out of use and are despised by up-to-date folk, do not necessarily cease to be interesting. They may gain a new sentimental interest, touching us with the half-melancholy charm of a vanished past. Sometimes, too, they develop a certain beauty from being neglected and left to themselves. Ancient buildings, disused canals, deserted havens, and most of all, perhaps, abandoned roads, have this way of clothing themselves with new attractions.

The sudden brusque rejection of what is no longer needed is particularly impressive in the case of those old mountain roads which the modern engineer in making his borings has shovelled aside with his other refuse. The three Alpine tunnels, the Mont Cenis, the Simplon, and the St. Gotthard, have each reduced a once frequented pass into Italy to a comparatively solitary road. Yet, in each case, the disused highway has for a few of us acquired a new interest.

Of the three passes named, Mont Cenis, though for many centuries it was the most frequented, is to-day the most deserted, since not even a diligence startles the mountain stillness with the jingle of its bells and the sharp explosive crack of its whip. Judging from what I saw and heard in September, 1910, when I crossed it, I should say that few English travellers of to-day know of its existence. This almost complete lapse

into oblivion is not merely due to the fact that it was the first to be undermined by the engineer;<sup>1</sup> it is due to the circumstance that the new railway route, unlike that of the Gotthard and of the Simplon, diverges considerably from the old road, passing seventeen miles to the south-west of the Mont Cenis, whose name it has usurped, and giving the traveller no glimpse, either of the ascent on the French side, or of the descent into Piedmont.

A short inspection will suffice to show that the Mont Cenis road cannot have been abandoned because of its unattractiveness. In many ways it resembles the other two crossings, having (on the Italian side) its gradual ascent up the side of a long valley, and its zigzag windings towards the summit, also its large plateau dotted with lake, hospice, and the rest, and ringed round with a circle of snow peaks. Tastes would no doubt differ as to the comparative beauty of the three passes. The Mont Cenis cannot boast of so imposing a feature as the ravine of Gondo on the Simplon route, or of so savage and sombre a scene as the Gotthard road between Goeschenen and Andermatt. Yet it is approached on the Savoy side by a valley of singular loveliness, and its summit, if less glorious than that of the Simplon, is much more impressive than that of the Gotthard, having in its large island-dotted lake a rare gem of mountain beauty. It seems worth while, therefore, to give a short description of it.

The Mont Cenis has for one chief attraction its approach through Savoy from Chambéry. This ancient capital of the Duchy of Savoy has still much to show the traveller besides its splendid castle; and its

<sup>1</sup> The Mont Cenis tunnel was opened in 1870, the St. Gotthard in 1882, and the Simplon in 1906.

neighbourhood has something of the charm of those interesting peak-forms which make Grenoble a place for a joyous lifting up of the eyes. From this city to Modane the old Mont Cenis road coincides with the modern railway, making a curious wavy line as it first dips southwards towards Grenoble, then turns northward up a bit of the wide valley of the Isère, and finally settles down to the long meandering valley of the Arc, or the Maurienne, as it is commonly known. Montmélian, the one considerable place on the Isère which it touches, will repay a short visit by a glance at its quaint old archways and wooden galleries, as well as at the venerable many-arched bridge which spans the Isère; where the peacefulness of uninvaded dwelling-places expresses itself in such sights as an angler fishing with a long rod from the back of a horse standing in a shallow of the river, rider and steed alike fixed and entranced. Above Chamousset, where the Arc joins the Isère, the valley of the Maurienne begins, the entrance to it being guarded by Aiguebelle, the ruins of whose castle still make a pretence of protecting it.

This valley has in France a well-earned fame for its romantic scenery, and since the railway to Modane threads more than two-thirds of its length, some English travellers over it, who have not passed in the night or the yet wearier hour of daybreak, can hardly have failed to note its picturesqueness. It deserves, however, a closer inspection than can be got from a railway carriage.

The Maurienne is for the most part a narrow valley, though now and again it expands into a reputable width, and sometimes cuts for itself large breathing places in side-valleys which bring the traveller a sense



of light and of escape. It offers too, especially in its higher reaches, glimpses of lofty summits which lure the eye with their glistening snow-slopes. As if to compensate the visitor for its inordinate length, it has done its best to vary, not only its course, but its scenery. In the wider portions, where its sides fall back, its bottom grows garden-like, joyously decking itself with the hues of corn, vines, and fruit trees. But after indulging in these short expansive moods it contracts into narrow defiles, where, instead of verdant fields, it offers the stranger's eye cliffs which shoot up boldly, the limestone now splitting into sharp, quaint tors, topped, perhaps, with an old castle, now fashioning its strata into a curious wavy design. Rich hanging woods of fir and beech alternate with the cliffs, much as they do in portions of the Wye Valley. Small towns and hamlets are dotted along the valley; the towns sticking close to the river, the hamlets venturing up the sloping sides. The dull grey slates which roof the houses give them a kind of shy look. They only call attention to themselves now and again by exhibiting a fine old stone bridge, or a peculiar form of church spire, springing from between four pinnacles projected a little outwards, which, whatever their abstract beauty, please the fancy by their suggestion of real "little wings" that somehow manage to keep the spire soaring.<sup>1</sup> The most noteworthy of these towns is the ancient capital of the Maurienne, Saint Jean de Maurienne, splendidly placed at the mouth of a broad side-valley. It is quiet enough to-day, yet it has a goodly hotel, and, for sights, offers a fine example of fourteenth-century wood-carving and a lovely

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Francis Bond tells me there are one or two examples of this form in England.

alabaster tabernacle in its cathedral, also an interesting Renaissance clock-tower, now discarded for a newer and commonplace one hard by.

The Arc seems to be the spirit of the valley uniting its diversified features. It preserves a constant colour, a sort of darkish bottle-green, save where some peculiar touch of the sun's rays makes it softly break into a smile of serene blue. It has, too, a fairly uniform flow, brisk yet unhurried, allowing it to keep up its blithe little song; as it does right bravely, ignoring the rude attempts of the electrical engineer to silence it by tapping its waters. Only seldom does it grow violent when rushing down a steep declivity, and then, as if half ashamed, it hides itself in the secrecy of some dark rocky gully. Keeping near the Arc, as if for cheerful company, is the road, which, with its double row of tufted trees, acacia, ash, plane, and poplar, supplies the valley with a second connecting thread.

Beautiful throughout its course, the valley grows wilder and more fascinating in what is known as the Haute Maurienne above Modane, after the railway traveller has parted company with it. One of its finest points lies a few miles above Modane, where the Arc disappears in a deep narrow gorge, and the companionable road mounts high above it, fronting one of its bold cliffs and a group of massive buildings, old and new, which compose the fort of Esseillon.

In these upper reaches of the valley we note stretches of unkempt, heathy ground, barren of all good things, also more turbulent passages of the Arc as it shoots down rocky declivities. We gain, too, as we ascend, ampler glimpses of the snow world, which mostly hides itself behind the nearer hills.

Lanslebourg, where the road leaves the valley, though a decrepit-looking little town, possesses an excellent hotel, the Valloire, a couple of churches worthy of a glance, and a picturesque old bridge spanning the Arc with two unequal arches. It looks out on snow-peaks; the fine mass of the Dent Parrachée (3712 metres) splendidly filling up the valley as one looks down it. The Mont Cenis road leaves the Maurienne with a look of reluctance, following it above Lanslebourg in a gradual ascent before it turns and winds upwards in a series of long zigzags.<sup>1</sup> As we ascend, the valley and its entourage spread themselves out into a noble prospect. The scenery grows more Alpine. On the grassy slopes near the road, a few cattle are dispersed, grazing near stone-roofed huts. These chalets show other signs of human life, now a little blue cart leaning on its shafts, now a sleepy mule or an imperfectly socialised flock of fowls pecking in a half-hearted way. At the Col, the height of which is marked 2082 metres, we pass two custom-houses, indicated by signboards, the first bearing the French, the second the Italian colours. A short descent brings us to the plateau, its spacious lake lit up by bright blue streaks, and girt with an amphitheatre of snow mountains, the lower slopes of which bristle with forts. The rippled surface of the water sparkles in the sun, and to the brightness of the mountains' snow-caps and of the lake is added that of the chalky boulders which strew the green meadows sloping down to the shore. We soon reach a considerable stretch of building facing the lake, composed of old hospice shelters, of which some are now

<sup>1</sup> The gradients are carefully indicated in *Itinéraires avec Profils des Pentes* (Route de la Région Savoissienne), édité par les Syndicats d'initiative de la Savoie (Chambéry).

transformed into hotels, others into barracks. The traveller will not err if he chooses the Hôtel della Posta or the Hôtel dell' Ospizio for his quarters, and he will find a summer evening well spent in wandering about the lake, noting its varying tints, and inspecting the chalky hollows where Alpine flowers thrive late in the season.

On the Italian side, the road, starting from a point which bears the magnificent name of "La Grande Croix," winds down a sharp zigzag, and then begins its gentle descent along the steep side of a fairly straight valley. It is broadly laid down and securely flanked with low stone columns and parapets; and it is only when we look down into the valley below that we realise how boldly Napoleon cut his gallery in the almost vertical cliff. Like the Emperor's other road, the Simplon, it is staged with numbered shelters, and is roofed over in places where it is likely to be blocked by snow or falling stones. The appearance of two or three strings of mules slowly dragging their carts along the road is likely to be a thorn in the side of the impatient motorist: so unpleasantly do the unaccommodating animals appear to assert their ancient prescriptive right to the thoroughfare.

As we descend, the valley widens and assumes a more fruitful aspect. Acacia, chestnut and walnut trees now border our road, while below us the plain smiles with the hues of ripe Indian corn and of vines yellowing under the first touch of autumn. Susa's red roofs begin to appear at the mouth of the valley just beyond a low hill tinged with fading grass. As we approach it we note the cunning way in which the mediæval wall has made use of the stretches of rock, wall and rock being not only continuous, but topped by the same form of battlement.



Susa is not a bad place for getting one's first impression of Italy. It is finely placed at the lower end of the Mont Cenis valley where this joins the valley from Mont Genève, which the railway traveller of to-day strikes in descending from the "Mont Cenis" tunnel. It skirts a bank of the Dora Riparia, which flows down from the Mont Genève side, to be joined at Susa by the Cenischia coming from Mont Cenis. The town catches something of the Italian sun, so that its hospitable inn seems appropriately named "Albergo del Sole"; and the visitor will welcome in the hot hours the cool shade of the arcades which line its streets. It is, moreover, as Hare justly remarks, a wonderfully picturesque place, and can boast of a quite considerable group of interesting old buildings. Among these are remains of the ancient city known to the Romans as Segusio, of which the pearl is the Triumphal Arch of Augustus, erected, as an inscription tells us, by the Gaulish King, Cottius, in the years B.C. 9-8. If less imposing than another arch erected in honour of Augustus at Aosta, it is more beautiful—luring the stranger's eye with its smooth white marble façade, which is set off by a mediæval wall hard by, built of thin layers of rough stone; and it is not disfigured, like the Aosta structure, by a heavy tiled roof.<sup>1</sup> Compared with the ruined wall, the arch seems at a first glance to have succeeded, as if by some miracle of its grace, in defying the destructive forces of the ages. Its whiteness, barely toned down by a yellowing touch, still looks fresh; the fluted columns at the four corners and the acanthus ornament of their capitals seem well preserved; and even the figures in the sacrificial

<sup>1</sup> The low roof of the Susa arch, added in the eighteenth century, is hardly noticeable.

procession on the frieze stand out with surprising distinctness. It is only a closer observation which discovers, as in the case of certain human faces, traces of the slow but unremitting process of decay. This discovers, too, signs of man's more violent action, the most prominent of which are the little slit-like holes spotting the white surface, due to the removal of the iron bolts that once fastened the blocks of marble together.<sup>1</sup>

The arch has had an interesting history which connects it with the adjacent mediæval wall. At first it stood outside Segusio on the most frequented of the ancient roads across the Alps, Mont Genève. The city was probably not enclosed by a wall before the second half of the third century. Remains of this enclosure may still be seen under the mediæval structure. The portion of the wall at the side of the arch—which encloses the ruins of a mediæval castle—has an ancient gate, now closed, the arch of which is built of large Roman bricks. It is flanked by two circular towers much damaged. This gate probably formed part of the original city wall. A little higher up, on the same road as the arch, stands another Roman ruin, a connected pair of arches, popularly regarded as remains of an aqueduct.<sup>2</sup> In the later days of the Roman Empire—possibly about the time when the city was first enclosed by a wall—both this pair of arches and the Arch of Augustus were drawn into the system of the town's defences, supplying an external protection to the gate. In order

<sup>1</sup> Hardly less disfiguring are the holes in the attic above the cornice caused by the theft of the bronze letters of the inscription.

<sup>2</sup> The theory that they once formed part of an aqueduct has been disputed. Nor does it seem quite certain to what date in the later period of the empire they belong.

to adapt the Triumphal Arch to this purpose, its attic was crowned by a wall pierced with circular windows—a disfigurement only removed in 1750 on the occasion of a visit of the Duke of Savoy and his bride. The traces of fire which have been discovered on the arch are pretty certainly scars left by the brunt of war, probably in an attack on the city when Constantine captured it by burning its gates.

The visitor of to-day may gain an idea of the arch when crowned with its wall by examining the Porta di Savoia, close to the Cathedral of S. Giusto, by which one enters the city on the north side. The tiers of small circular windows, which form so striking a feature in this gate, stamp it with the mark of a Roman construction. The ancient gate close to the Triumphal Arch is supposed to have resembled this one in its design.

A stroll outside the town between white walls, where a solitary cypress stands sentinel, to the crumbling yet still interesting church of St. Francis, will give the visitor a foretaste of hot southern roads. A more important and better preserved church is the Cathedral of S. Giusto, said to date from the eleventh century, the exterior of which at once captures the eye by its fine campanile and its interesting brick ornament.

In addition to its old buildings, Susa has a fine natural feature in the adjacent Monte Rocciamelone (Mont Rochemelon). On entering the arch of Augustus from the south side, you see the mountain framed in by the marble structure. Many a Roman official, and Gaul too, must have been struck by the picture; especially if, as it is said, not only a mediæval but an ancient superstition attached a peculiar sacredness to the mountain. In later times, too, a religious significance was given to the imposing peak. In the Cathedral of



PORTA SAVOIA, SUSA.





Susa there is preserved a bronze triptych, one of the figures on which is a kneeling knight, who is said to have carried the triptych to the summit of Monte Rocciamelone in 1358. A chapel still crowns the summit, and the triptych is borne every year on August 5th (the festival of Notre Dame des Neiges) in a procession to the chapel. As the mountain is 11,605 feet high, this means a climb from Susa of just 10,000 feet. The custom suggests that the mountain offers to the climber a peculiarly favourable set of conditions; and this is further illustrated in the fact that it was the first high peak to be reached by the alpinist.<sup>1</sup> The size of the mountain greatly impressed travellers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Coryat declaring it to be fourteen miles high.<sup>2</sup>

Even if it were less attractive in itself, the Mont Cenis pass would deserve a visit for its historical associations. Archæologists incline to the view that it was practically unknown to the Romans of the late Republic and the early Empire: this portion of the Alps having been commonly crossed by way of Mont Genève.<sup>3</sup> The name "Cenis" first appears in 739 as that of certain pastures—presumably those on the plateau. As a pass it is first mentioned in connection with the crossing of it by Pippin in 756. After that it became a fashion, and was the pass usually crossed by Frankish kings on their way to Lombardy. Early in the ninth century Louis the Pious founded the Hospice on the summit. It was also, with the exception of the Great St. Bernard,

<sup>1</sup> See W. A. B. Coolidge, *The Alps in Nature and History*, pp. 205, 206, 259, 260.

<sup>2</sup> On the early crude modes of guessing the height of mountains, see Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> On the passes crossed by the Romans and Hannibal, see Coolidge, *op. cit.*, chap. viii, especially pp. 156–163.

the pass most frequented by the Emperors—Charlemagne and his successors.

Some of these crossings by king and emperor make pathetic stories. Charles the Bald died on his way over the pass in 877. In 1076–7 Henry IV, accompanied by his wife and suite, crossed it at the risk of his life in his endeavour to conciliate the offended Pope Hildebrand (Gregory VII). The buffetings of the stormy Alps were for him only a prelude to worse miseries, when he was to climb to the fortress of Canossa where the Pope was staying, and to be kept waiting for three days outside its gates in the garb of a penitent, barefoot and fasting, and smitten by a snowstorm, before the irate Pontiff would pardon him.<sup>1</sup> Hardly less pathetic was the retreat of Frederick Barbarossa across this pass in 1168, beaten and embittered after the Lombard League had blocked all the northern passes. He had his revenge later, when, returning by the same pass in 1174, he destroyed Susa. Among the picturesque groups that might in those mediæval days have been seen wending their way up to the Col were bands of pilgrims faring to the Holy Land—mostly by way of Venice—or to Rome and other Italian cities, to visit the sacred relics. We are not told whether Chaucer passed this way on either of his visits to Italy, or how many of the eager English and other students who a century later hastened to Italy to gather the first bloom of the revived learning followed this route.

<sup>1</sup> The account of this crossing by a chronicler is interesting, as showing us how ladies were drawn down the icy slopes towards Italy on skins. The first reference to “tobogganing” on wooden sledges (“ramassier” or “glisser à la ramasse”) and of the guides or steersmen (“marons”) occurs in a description of the crossing of the pass by a Dowager-Duchess of Savoy in 1476. (On the early crossings of Mont Cenis, see Coolidge, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–166.)

About the road itself and the manner of crossing the pass these early travellers are silent. It is only with the entrance of the sixteenth century that we begin to learn what the experience was like. That it was the route commonly taken by the now rapidly increasing number of travellers to Italy is shown by the itinerary from England to Florence and Rome given in *Arnold's Chronicle* (1519), which passes through Paris and Lyons to Susa and Turin. The new comers included some distinguished names. Erasmus took the pass of Mont Cenis when he went from England to Turin to take his degree of Doctor in Theology at the University of that city. He travelled with a party as superintendent of studies to the two sons of Henry VIII's physician; and he tells us that, being bored by a quarrel between two of his companions, he beguiled the tediousness of the ride by getting his poem on old age done, noting it down on paper from time to time on his saddle. Rabelais may have taken this route when, in 1534, he accompanied Jean du Bellay (afterwards Cardinal) as physician in his journey from Lyons to Rome. Later in the century Montaigne crossed the Alps by this pass on returning from his long sojourn in Italy (1581).

Again and again we are told by these early travellers that the crossing of Mont Cenis was regarded with repugnance and dread. Two pilgrim knights, who journeyed to the East by way of the pass in the sixteenth century, touch on the hardships of the crossing: Sir Richard Guylforde speaking of "the grievous mounte Senys" (Cenis), and Sir Richard Torkington telling us that when he reached Susa he rested awhile, for (he adds) "I was weary and my horse also, for the great labour that I had the same morning in passing



over the evil and grievous Mounte Senes.”<sup>1</sup> Richard Croke, the Emissary of Henry VIII, wrote home that he had been delayed on Mont Cenis by a high wind, and that as he wrote he “still shuddered to think of the dangers of the road.” The miseries of the crossing are again and again referred to by travellers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were so well known that Richardson was able to introduce an account of them in his *History of Sir Charles Grandison*.<sup>2</sup> They probably had something to do with the not infrequent practice of avoiding the pass and the Alps altogether by taking to the sea in a felucca and risking the unpleasantness of a storm.

These complaints refer in part, no doubt, as Croke’s language suggests, to the inclemencies of cold, wind, and snow. To these physical hardships there was added the risk of an encounter with the wild peasants of the heights, a risk illustrated by the experience of Horace Walpole when, as he puts it, a “devil of discord in the similitude of sour wine had got amongst our Alpine savages and set them a-fighting with Gray and me.” But a good deal of the feeling of repulsion of the travellers must be set down to the discomforts attendant on the mode of locomotion. We must remember that the Mont Cenis road was a very different thing in those days from the broad, gently sloping highway of to-day. It had the hardihood of its age and, despising *détours*, boldly attacked both ascent and descent. On the Savoy side it crossed the Arc by the old stone bridge opposite Lanslebourg and climbed the steep mountain-

<sup>1</sup> Mont Cenis was spelt “Mont Senis” as late as 1758, by the translator of Keyser’s *Travels through Germany*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See the Edition in *The British Novelists* (1810), Vol. XII, pp. 287 ff.

side up which the procession of telegraph posts passes to-day. If the pedestrian, instead of keeping to the highway, climbs to the Col with the telegraph posts he will find traces of the old mule-path running up in short zigzags. It is solidly paved and flanked with large flat stones which still stand erect. It is well preserved, though broken in places, and its utter disuse by man is pathetically attested, not only by nature's efforts to bury it under a grassy covering, but by its acceptance in places of the humble rôle of watercourse.<sup>1</sup>

On the Italian side, again, instead of passing along the elevated gallery cut by Napoleon in the cliff, the old road struck down from La Grande Croix by a much steeper descent to Novalesa. Here there once stood the famous Benedictine monastery of Novalesa. This house, it is said, flourished from 726 to 1855. Among other events in its history was its destruction (soon after 906) by Spanish Saracens who had settled in the Alps,<sup>2</sup> and the selection of it by Charlemagne for a Lenten retirement from the world. This mule-track is still used for descending from Mont Cenis into the valley, and the pedestrian may with advantage adopt this short cut to the valley. The track follows more or less faithfully the course of the noisy torrent of the Cenischia and passes through the poor but not unsightly little village of Ferrera. The road offers fine views of the celebrated Monte Rocciamelone. The old writers speak of this part of the road as of a *mauvais pas*. A traveller in the early part of the eighteenth century tells us that here one had to walk through narrow passes between

<sup>1</sup> Saussure, in his *Voyages dans les Alpes*, tells us that when there was snow one could descend from the Col to Lanslebourg on a small sleigh steered by a man sitting in front in five or six minutes.

<sup>2</sup> See Coolidge, *op. cit.*, pp. 82 and 166.

steep rocks. Another, who passed here later in the century, apparently referring to this part of the crossing, speaks of the path as running on the edge of precipices, having on the one hand monstrous impending rocks, on the other a boisterous torrent. A lady traveller of a still later date, writing to a friend, says, "You will be perfectly satisfied that we have not broken our necks down the precipice of Mont Cenis"; and she describes the descent from La Grande Croix as a broken staircase with sharp windings.

The steepness and roughness on both sides made riding difficult, so that the old travellers were provided at Lanslebourg with sedan chairs, of which Tom Coryat of the *Crudities* and others give us a full account. The number of carriers allotted to each traveller by the Sindico of Lanslebourg varied with his corpulence and probable weight; and one who obviously exceeded in obesity John Bull's recognised dimensions might have to pay heavily. Mules were taken and appear to have been commonly ridden in ascending the pass. The plateau was crossed in winter in a sledge drawn by a horse. At La Grande Croix the chaises were taken to pieces, and, together with the baggage, packed on mules and asses. In descending from this point even the sure-footed mule was considered to be insecure, and the traveller was expected to allow himself to be suspended in the sedan chair from the shoulders of his four carriers. These were given to running down the *mauvais pas*, "stepping from stone to stone with incredible swiftness." In the winter one might descend from La Grande Croix to Novalesse still more swiftly in sledges. Keysler (who travelled in 1729) tells us that this bit of tobogganing could be performed in seven or eight minutes, adding that some travellers,

especially English and German, enjoyed it so much that they would "go up by mule again to have another go."

Such a rude manner of crossing the pass was calculated to imbue the traveller with a certain dread of the Alps; and this dread naturally led to the making of wild statements about the height, steepness, etc., of Mont Cenis. A certain Mr. Clenche, for example, who travelled in 1675, speaks of it as the highest of the *Alps*, though it is not the highest pass; while even a philosopher like Berkeley, who crossed it as governor to a pupil, describes it in a letter to Prior as "one of the most difficult and formidable parts of the Alps which is ever passed by mortal man." It is curious that the eighteenth-century travellers, who were so careful to measure the girth of a column and to count the number of steps in an amphitheatre, should have been so loose in their calculations when mountains were concerned.

The travellers' almost shuddering attitude towards Mont Cenis is not, however, fully accounted for by the rigours of the crossing. Our forbears appear to have been quite lacking in our more joyous attitude towards mountains. As is well known, these were, up to the time of Rousseau, an almost unknown world, and repelled the stranger, not only by their savage and threatening mien, but by their ruined and desolate aspect.<sup>1</sup> The very few passages one finds in the records of travellers touching the picturesqueness of the mountain scenery, refer, as with Addison, to the beauty of the lakes dispersed among the hollows, or, with Keysler, to the variety of the flowers which grow on the mountains. As we have seen, Gray was the first

<sup>1</sup> For a full analysis of this common attitude towards mountains, see Leslie Stephen, *The Playground of Europe*, chaps. I. and II. For one or two claimed exceptions, see Bates, *op. cit.*, pp. 303 ff.



English traveller crossing the Mont Cenis who found "something fine" in its more savage aspect.<sup>1</sup>

The transformation of the scene of the pass when travellers began to cross it sitting at their ease in a carriage, was completed after 1815, when Napoleon ceased to be dreaded, and his road lay open to the long-delayed and impatient crowd of English tourists. By the year 1826, when Hazlitt crossed the pass, there were the Royal Diligences of Italy plying from Lyons over Mont Cenis to Turin, the fare for a place in the interior from Lyons to Turin being seventy francs, and the charge presumably the same for all shades of obesity.<sup>2</sup> After this date, though the crossing in the diligence during a March night could hardly be called luxurious,<sup>3</sup> we have no more allusions to the terrors of the grievous Mont Cenis. It was perhaps the crowding of the road which made Byron, as later it made Browning, take his own less-frequented route to Italy. Another poet, Shelley, seems to have crossed by Mont Cenis in 1818.

In 1868 a light railway was carried over the pass and worked by English engine-drivers.<sup>4</sup> But this plucky

<sup>1</sup> The first reference that I have found to the singular charm of the Maurienne is in an unpublished journal of a young English traveller who crossed the Mont Cenis in December, 1835, and saw the valley in its winter's garb and enlivened with peasants moving about in their sledges.

<sup>2</sup> This may be compared with the eight to eleven guineas which, according to an eighteenth-century traveller, Samuel Sharp, was demanded for a "voiturin" (vetturino) and a pair of horses (the traveller supplying his own coach and chaise), to take him over the same route. This charge, however, appears to have covered dinner, supper and lodging, and the larger part of the payment made to the carriers.

<sup>3</sup> George Eliot had this experience in 1860.

<sup>4</sup> See Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

venture only lasted three years owing to the opening of the so-called Mont Cenis tunnel in 1870. From this date the pass ceased to be crossed save by the few travellers who thought the mountain air and scenery preferable to the fume-filled tunnel, even at the cost of diminished speed.

To-day you may walk over the pass without meeting an Englishman ; yet the road, so far from being wholly deserted, is fairly alive with tourists during the months of August and September. They are chiefly Italian and French pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. The new motor can claim, as a set-off to its noise, smell, and other unpleasantnesses, the credit of having revived many an old and moribund country road. It is reviving Mont Cenis ; for this pass is an easy one for the motorist as compared with others which have sharper turnings, or which, like the Gotthard, are not open to the motorist during the greater part of the day save on the condition of his submitting to the indignity of making himself a spectacle for gods and men by having two horses hitched on to his machine. Automobile services, moreover, now run during the summer months both from Modane and from Susa to the plateau. And since there is quite satisfactory hotel accommodation, not only on the plateau, but at Lanslebourg and Susa, it may be surmised that the English tourist will soon wake up to the rich possibilities which lie in combining with a visit to Chambéry—where the Hôtel de France will take excellent care of him—and excursions into some of the attractive places in the neighbourhood of the old Savoy capital, an inspection of at least the upper portion of the Maurienne and a run over the once famous Mont Cenis Pass into Italy.

But this ancient route is too beautiful to be monopo-

lised by motorists, who, as one of their recent spokesmen admits,<sup>1</sup> are far from giving undivided attention to the scenery through which they shoot. It deserves to be visited by the pedestrian hardly less than the Gotthard route, where, between Goeschenen and the pass, one may see on a fine day in July or August quite a procession of Swiss and German tourists of both sexes and of very diverse ages, carrying their rucksacks, and possibly their coats, whose weight sits lightly on hearts bent upon the bracing pleasures of a tramp over the mountain road.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Charles Freeston, in *The High-roads of the Alps*.

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